

History of Wilkinsburg
Pennsylvania

Harry C. Gilchrist

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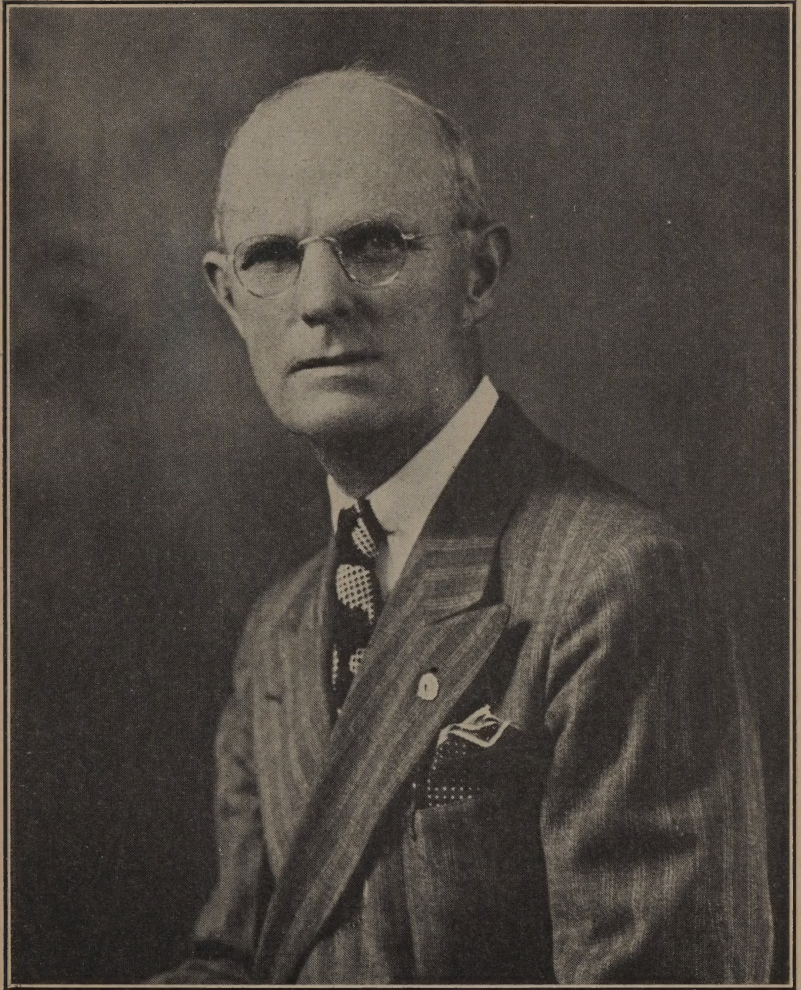
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HARRY C. GILCHRIST

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THE AUTHOR

To my good friend, William N. Offut (deceased—age 85), the youngest old man I ever knew.

His four score years had mellowed his character, giving him a charm and likewise a tolerance that endeared him to all who knew him; a lover of nature; a traveler who had eyes to see and whose descriptive, fascinating letters have never been equalled by any one I have ever known. He possessed little of this world's goods, but did possess that priceless jewel "a happy and contented spirit". To him, I dedicate this book.

FORWARD

Wilkinsburg is a typical upstate American town. Founded when the drums of the Shawnees and the Delawares were throbbing their messages of blood up and down the wild Pennsylvania foot-hills.

The town has come down through the years, being a part of and making a piece of the history of America. Its people composed in the main, of ancient American stock, have a certain conceit peculiar to themselves, that has become a tradition to us latter-day Wilkinsburgers.

During the French and Indian wars, the first church services were held on the ridge east of town, and religion has been the motif of the community from that time to this. Outsiders call it (in derision) "The Holy City". We in Wilkinsburg refuse to accept the term, but we still gaze fondly and proudly on our churches—a new one every few years or so.

Mr. Gilchrist, in this volume, has made no effort to become a statistical historian. He, in the modern manner, is indifferent to the cold, chronological order of things. In reading the book, I gain the impression of a fireside tale, a warm, living story of a town founded in the wilderness and grown gray and somewhat great in the passing centuries.

Many famous sons and daughters have amply filled their niches in the great gallery of human affairs, and these of course add the sparkle to the history by the warm, plain, American way of living.

Living, earning, and working is the true warp and woof of the community.

Wilkinsburg deserves this book; and the book deserves Wilkinsburg.

JOHN McDOWELL.

PREFACE

One great motive has dominated me in the preparation and content of this volume—the value and preservation of the ideals, traditions and customs responsible for making this not only the largest Borough in the State, but also a town where the moral and spiritual forces were strong enough to discourage those destructive institutions and drives from settling here, but invited and encouraged those people seeking a quiet, peaceful and safe community in which to make their home and raise their families.

I have sought after the deep flowing and powerful currents of the early settlers' lives, which made them kind, helpful and sympathetic to each other and hospitable to the stranger.

I have tried to understand their yearnings for something other than the hard labor involved in felling the great oaks and chestnuts to build their log cabins and barns; in clearing the land, following the oxen and plow, sowing and reaping; of their resourcefulness in combining work and play in barn raisings, barn dancing and corn huskings. Their singing societies, spelling bees, literary societies and picnics were the outgrowth of their efforts to provide entertainment for young America.

I have told the story of their habits, customs, superstitions, religion and politics. Their lives were centered around the church and school house for religion, entertainment, and things of a literary character. Of these two, the church seemed to be

the greatest factor in shaping the lives of our people. First, Old Beulah from 1784 to 1843; then the little Methodist Church, the first in the town proper. The first school in 1840, and later Wilkinsburg Academy, were greatly influenced by the churches. As a result, the village came to be recognized as a community dominated by the ideals of the church.

Just as the Puritans came across the sea seeking a place to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, so people came from the city and other towns to settle here because they sought our ways of life, and thus the town grew.

Colonel Dunning McNair came here from the East in 1787, Mrs. McNair followed later the same year. The McNairs were both refined and cultured people. They built two of the most pretentious houses in the village, or for that matter in this end of the State, "Crow's Nest" and "Dumpling Hall". McNairs immediately assumed leadership and became the first family of the village. They introduced a new way of life and manners of which the village people knew nothing. Later, Judge William Wilkins, after whom the village was named, settled here. He built the Wilkins' Mansion in 1835. This territory was still a township. Judge Wilkins was also an educated and refined man, and the cultured life of Wilkins' Mansion was felt in the village. Dunning McNair's death occurred in 1824 and his mantle fell upon James Kelly. Mr. Kelly found a high type of moral life here and succeeded in preserving it until the time of his death in 1884, as will be found recorded in later pages herein.

The churches, schools and these three families were the stepping stones or foundation responsible for our high type of citizenship and enviable position among all the boroughs of the state.

It is of striking significance that when our people finally decided that this should become a Borough, it was a clergyman, Reverend C. W. Smith, whom they elected as Burgess. It is also significant that the councilmen chosen up to 1912 were men connected with, or in full sympathy with the standards of civic life endorsed by the church.

In the light of the above, it does not seem unreasonable to believe that a reporter or visitor to the Borough, especially on the Sabbath day, finding himself in such atmosphere, should remark, "Holy City, eh?". Someone must have had some such experience, for those words have been identified with our town for almost a half century, and we have in a measure justified the charge (by contrast) in driving out the "open saloon" and "Sunday movies", thus encouraging other surrounding boroughs. This sentiment should be encouraged. To do this, we must teach the younger generation so that the future may be safeguarded.

I mention three other reasons for this book—the battle of James Kelly to recover our name and rule ourselves when the city annexed our Borough; his successful efforts to make this and surrounding country dry territory; and the battle of those who succeeded in making our town into a Borough.

I am indebted to Reverend E. U. Hoenshel, D.D., of Waynesboro, Virginia, an author of many books, who read my manuscript; to Professor William C.

Graham, Superintendent of Wilkinsburg Schools, for the list of School Directors, and to his capable secretary, Miss Anna M. Geider, who typed the list, and supplied me with other information.

I am also indebted to Dr. T. W. McFadden, George Rankin, Jr., and James Steel, all of whom aided me greatly in issuing the first edition, and have likewise supported me in publishing this second book. Samuel Einstein (merchant) has given me splendid support in the sale of the present volume, as has George H. Humbert.

The merchants, professional men and most of the Borough officers, councilmen, and members of Bible classes of various denominations, including their ministers, have responded with their subscriptions.

My secretary, Margaret Lane, has tirelessly and carefully typed the manuscript, and I am indebted to her, also.

I am especially indebted to my friend and traveling companion for many years, Professor Elmer E. Boyd (retired), former Superintendent of Wilkins Township Schools for his tireless efforts in the sale and distribution of the book.

Congressman John McDowell, publisher of the Wilkinsburg Gazette, has been gracious in giving me space in announcing the publication of the book.

I have reproduced herein all of the historical reading matter contained in the first edition, and most of the illustrations. It does not appear necessary to again refer to the numerous volumes consulted, nor the help received from various individuals and sources in this present volume, as all were duly recognized in 1927.

The additional material from 1927 to 1940 are from the personal records, observations and experiences of the author.

These are the reasons for this volume. I send it forth to the people with apologies for its shortcomings, its errors and omissions but with the hope that the reader will find within its covers a faithful narration of the lives of many of the people who lived here, who "did their bit" to make this a better place to live in than when they came.

H. C. G.

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CHAPTER ONE.

THE FRONTIER LIFE.

Trails — George Washington — Indian Villages — Queen Aliquippa — Indian Tribes — Indian lover of nature — Capt. Celeron — Frazier, Scotch Blacksmith — General Braddock's defeat — General Forbes' success — Fort Duquesne — Fort Pitt — Pittsburgh — Boundary Dispute Virginia and Pennsylvania — Fort Pitt sold — Hanna's Town, county seat — call of the wild — Log cabins — Farming — Transportation.



THE territory comprising the borough limits of Wilkinsburg was once part of the vast forest which reached northward to the Allegheny River and beyond, southward to the Youghiogeny, and westward to the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers. The only way through this forest was by trails. These were very narrow, owing to the fact that the Indians did not use any kind of wheel conveyances. If it were necessary to haul anything, a horse was hitched between two long poles, like the shafts of a wagon, and the load was placed across them. For this reason, the trails were very narrow. Some of them were mere paths, which followed no clear markings. But there were several of these trails which were very old and easily followed, and were used frequently enough to prevent the undergrowth from obliterating them.

One of these trails followed the Allegheny River from its intersection with the Monongahela to Shanopin's town on the southern bank, near what is now Thirty-Second Street, Pittsburgh. This village was ruled by a woman, Queen Aliquippa, of the

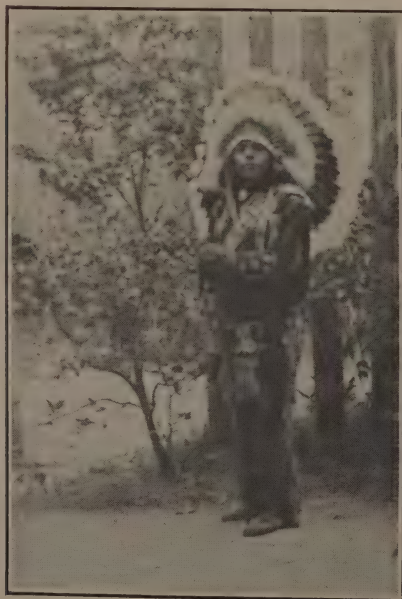
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Iroquois tribe. Since the tribe had such little regard for women, it is difficult to understand how this woman was elevated to such a place of authority and prominence. She must have been a remarkable character. All of the writers refer to her, but no one attempts to explain her power. Washington mentions her in the journal which he kept during his first trip to these parts. From Shannopin's town, the trail continued up the Allegheny, following the course of the river to Chartiers Town, another Indian Village, located on the present site of Tarentum Borough; somewhere near Verona, another trail led off this trail following the ravine along the present improved county road, coming

Shannopin
Town



into Wilkinsburg through Crab Hollow, and continued through Edgewood down the ravine to the Monongahela River, where it joined the southern trail which led through Braddock to the Indian village at the intersection of the Youghiogheny and the Monongahela rivers, now McKeesport. It was over this latter trail that Queen Alliquippa fled at the approach of the French when they came down the Allegheny in 1754. The name of this Indian village on the banks of the Youghiogheny is not known. Washington mentions his visit to the Queen at this spot, but gives no name to the village. The tribes, however, who occupied these regions were the Iroquois, Shawnees, and Delawares. Thus it will be seen that the Indians connected up their villages by trails. Many of these have become the present roads, and are bearing Indian names, such as the Susquehanna.

It is not necessary to enter into a description of the Indian's manner of living, his house or wigwam, his tilling of the soil, his weaving, his crockery-work, or his contribution to the arts. All these may be found in works dealing with these several subjects. But suffice it to say that the site on which Wilkinsburg is built was part of that great domain over which the Indians held undisputed sway for years. From what is known of Indian life, there can be little doubt that the smoke from many campfires has ascended through the tree tops, perhaps in the very spot where now some of the finest homes and business houses are situated. The roving bands of Indians, as they pursued the chase, stalked their game, or gathered roots, herbs, and the bark of

India
Tribe
Trail

India
Life

trees, would slake their thirst at the springs which were scattered throughout this territory, and would seek shelter from the storms among the rocks of Fern Hollow.

These Indians were lovers of nature, and had little difficulty in seeing God in the storm, the heavens, and the streams. They felt a power around them greater than themselves, and greater than their tribes, and they reasoned well when they called that power the "Great Spirit," whom they recognized as the author of all life. If they had great crops, the Great Spirit was pleased with the people. If crops were short, or if floods or storms destroyed them, or if hunting or fishing was bad, the Great Spirit was angry. They believed in an after life, and called that future abode the "Happy Hunting Ground". Before he came into contact with the white man, the Indian had a strict code of laws and high ideals. The members of the tribe who broke these laws met with justice, tempered with little mercy. His hard battle with nature taught him to be brave so that he loved courage and hated cowardice. A liar was likened unto a serpent with a forked tongue, treachery to the wolf, and deceivers to serpents. A brave with a stern countenance was named "Black Cloud." A fast runner was called "Deer Foot." He gave his daughters such names as "Red Bird," and "Song Bird," and he likened her laughter to the music of falling waters. Nature to the Indian was an open book. He understood her moods, and read her with a certainty that is surprising to the student of Indian life. We are too often disposed to think only of the Indian with his tomahawk, scalping

Indians
lovers of
Nature

Cour-
ageous,
Cruel

knife, or fire brand; and overlook the fact that there is a poetic side to his nature, savage though he be. In reading his most eloquent speeches in the councils of the tribes, we find him constantly making reference to the beauty of the spring time, the harvest, the fading, dying summer, and the falling leaves. He considered the heavens and the firmament thereof, as did the psalmist of old; and nature's God found him an apt scholar, with a listening ear, and an understanding heart to learn wisdom from the one teacher who was ever present with him.

Such was Indian life and the country hereabouts, according to the records which have been handed down to us from the time that the white man first made his appearance in these parts. No doubt the Indians had heard of the white men from tribes which were being driven farther west, or from roving bands of individuals who came this way from the east. That is the reason they were resentful in 1749 when Captain Celeron, a French officer,

Nature
An Open
Book



CAPT. M. DE BEOUJEU

came down the Allegheny river with a story that a great white king, or father, across the sea had sent him, with others, to inform them that these lands

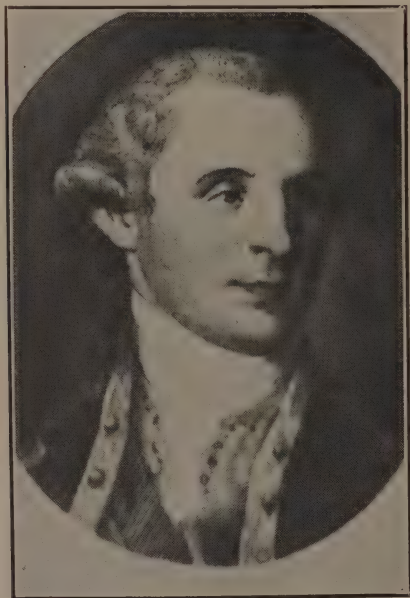
and forests did not belong to them, but were the property of His Majesty, the King of France. Some writers believe that Captain Celeron was the first white man that ever penetrated this region. He must have been a curious sight to the Indians. The Scotch blacksmith, Frazier, who lived at the mouth of Turtle Creek came very early, but the date of his coming is not certain. Washington speaks of his living there in 1753, when he visited these parts.

On November 24, 1753, George Washington

First
White Man

Frazier

George
Washington



GEORGE WASHINGTON
Age 18-20, as Surveyor and Guide.

arrived here from Virginia with a message from Governor Dinwiddie to the French Commandant at

Fort Le Bouef. In the early spring, April, 1754, the English, under Captain Trent, began to erect a fort at the intersection of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers. They had scarcely completed the erection of the stockade, when the French under Contrecoeur swooped down upon the British, and Ensign Ward, who was commanding in the absence of Captain Trent, was forced to surrender. This fort was completed by the French in 1754, and was known as Fort Duquesne, but it did not remain long in their possession.

Captain
Trent

It was inevitable that the Indians should play an important part in this history, so both the French and the British began to plot for their aid. With guns, powder, and plenty of "fire water", each played for the favor and help of the red man. Each painted the other the blackest of the black,—the greatest of all deceivers. The king of France was at first successful, but the allegiance was lost later. In July 1755, with the help of the Indians the French defeated General Braddock at Braddock's

General
Braddock's
Defeat



GENERAL EDWARD BRADDOCK

Fields in a battle most disastrous to the English. General Braddock was so badly wounded that he

died while his army was retreating southward. He was buried beside the National Highway, east of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. As a result of this defeat, parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia were thrown open to the attacks of the Indians. The British pride suffered very greatly at home; and their prestige abroad was lowered, because of General Braddock's defeat, so that there was good reason for the pessimism manifested at the English Court at the close of 1755. In addition to this, British power and trade had suffered greatly in the East Indies, on the Mediterranean, and in Canada; and British confidence was at a rather low ebb until 1758, when the elder Pitt came into power. Then the British House was set in order, and the three previous years of disaster, disgrace, and despondency were succeeded by three years of triumph and success.

General
Forbes'
Success

In 1758, General Forbes began to work his way from the east. It was the journey of a very sick man for he had to be carried in a litter the entire distance. But he possessed an iron will, and amid his suffering he urged the army forward, fuming and swearing at every sign of delay. He was bent on punishing the French and Indians for Braddock's terrible defeat. Whether he would have made the same terrible mistake of trying to fight the Indians and the French in the open, as Braddock had done, will never be known, for on the night of November 24, 1758, while his army was encamped at Turtle Creek, a terrible explosion was heard. Later, a deserter from Fort Duquesne brought the news that the French had blown up the fort, because Indian

Fall
Fort
Duquesne

spies reported that the English were as innumerable as the trees of the forest. Forbes' army took possession of the desolate Fort Duquesne the next day. He had with him 1,267 Scotch Highlanders, 363 Royal Americans, and 4,350 Provincial troops. There is a tradition that the camp of General Forbes was at the site of what is now Beulah Church. However this may be, it is almost certain that his route lay directly through what is now Wilkinsburg. The country was so sparsely settled at this early date, that General Forbes experienced great difficulty in securing provisions for his army. He had to depend largely on wild game. They had expected to find great stores of food at Fort Duquesne when they arrived, but the French had destroyed everything, so that all the famished army could obtain was venison and bear meat, which they devoured without salt or bread. General Forbes took possession of Fort Duquesne on November 25, 1758. He did not remain long, but returned to Philadelphia, where he died March 17, 1759, and was buried under the chancel of Christ Church. Some time in the early part of 1759, after the death of General Forbes, the name of the fort was changed to Fort Pitt, in honor of the then Prime Minister of England, William Pitt. Later, the city received the name of Pittsburgh for the same reason. The establishment of the formidable fort in 1760 by General Stanwix brought back many of the white settlers from the outer borders of Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland.

In 1763 the Indians again brought consternation to the white settlers, and continued to harass them

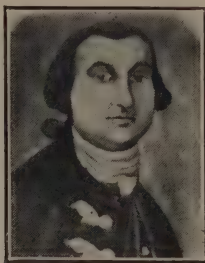
General
Forbes'
Death

Fort
Pitt

Pittsburgh

Siege
Captain
Ecuyer

for a year. A siege was laid against Fort Pitt, then under the command of Captain Ecuyer, but the fort, which was attacked from every side, held out. The siege continued throughout the year, and the greater part of 1764, when Col. Boquet, a



COL. HENRY BOQUET,
A Swiss Officer.

Bushy
Run

Colonel
Boquet
Campaign

former aide of General Forbes in 1758, was put in command. A battle was fought at Bushey run about 22 miles east of Fort Pitt, not far from what is now Harrison City, in which the Indians were routed, and the siege was lifted on September 17, 1764. Col. Boquet later pursued the Indians down the Ohio to the forks of the Muskingum. Here a delegation of Indians came to Col. Boquet and informed him that the chiefs, eight miles away, were ready to make a treaty for peace. The Indians were the Senecas, Delawares, and Shawnees. It resulted in the establishment of peace, and the Indians turned over all prisoners, amounting to two hundred and six persons, including women and children. Boquet returned with his army to Fort Pitt, having established peace throughout the country.

This lasted for about ten years, until 1774, during which the white settlers came westward, and contrary to the treaty settled on the lands of the Indians, causing them to complain of the bad faith of the white brothers. The matter reached the ears of the king of Great Britain, and instructions were issued to Governor John Penn to do all in his power to have these settlers remove from the Indian lands. These same instructions were given to General Gage, then commander of the British forces in America, and he with Penn and the Governor of Virginia endeavored to carry them out. They did forceably remove the settlers, but as soon as the soldiers had left, they returned. The whites were headed westward, and apparently nothing could stop them. It was during this period that George Washington made his third trip from Virginia. He arrived here in October 1770 on a mission down the Ohio. From his pen we find the first reference to the point on which Pittsburgh stands, and the very first statement that exists of the number of houses in Pittsburgh also comes from the records of his journal. He estimates the number of houses outside the fort at 20,—all log houses. This represented about 120 persons to the town, exclusive of the garrison.

Peace

John
PennGeorge
WashingtonPittsburgh
1770Boundry
Dispute
Settled

It must be kept in mind that Virginia still claimed all the territory in this vicinity, and although Virginia's title and authority were disputed by the Penns, who claimed that their grant from the throne of England included all this ground, yet they would not fight for it, since that was contrary to their Quaker faith. The boundary dispute be-

tween Virginia and Pennsylvania was finally settled by a commission in 1779. It was ratified by both states in 1780, thus bringing to a close this long disputed and troublesome question.

Fort Pitt
Abandoned

Fort Pitt
Sold

In October 1772, orders were received by Major Edmondson, the commanding officer, to abandon Fort Pitt and sell it to the highest bidder. This was done, and it sold for the small sum of fifty pounds, New York currency. Thus the fort which had cost the British sixty thousand pounds and many lives, and which was designed to establish the British Empire on the Ohio for all time, was abandoned in about thirteen years. Even the wise William Pitt, after whom it was named, could not



WILLIAM PITT,
Prime Minister.

Hanna's
Town

Allegheny
County
Formed

forsee this terrible blunder. During this time, Pittsburgh was part of Westmoreland County, with the County seat at Hanna's Town, now known as New Alexandria and located about 25 miles east of Pittsburgh on the William Penn Highway. It was not until 1788 that Allegheny County was formed from parts of Westmoreland and Washington Coun-

ties. Pittsburgh, which was the county seat, did not become a city until March 18, 1816.

In studying the history of a people or a community, nothing is more interesting to the student than the motive, or driving force, which sent these peoples out to dare and to do the impossible. We do not mean the soldiers or the military forces for they know only the life of obedience and go where they are sent; but men like Frazier, who lived alone at the mouth of Turtle Creek probably as early as 1750; or men like Boone, Smith, Carson, and others who followed these trail blazers bringing their wives and often children with them into wilds from which there seemed little chance of returning. They turned their backs on civilization, safety and food, and plunged into the forest, braving the dangers of wild beasts and savages to build their cabins in the forest where the foot of white men seldom trod. To live in such places meant that every sense must be alert. Everything must be seen, heard, and understood lest it cost them their lives. They knew all this, yet they went. Why did they go? Was it simply the desire for adventure? Was it the desire for religious liberty? Or was it the call of the wild? Was it a little of all three? To those who love the great open spaces, the forest, hills, mountains, and streams, there is no music like the babbling brook, the zephyrs that play through the tree tops, the singing of birds, the chase, and even when they lie down to rest in the darkness of the night the insect life sings them into slumber with gentle lullabys. The farther such people are from the noise of town or city life, the better they

Pioneer's

Call of
the Wild

Trail
Blazers

seem satisfied. It was men and women of this type who became the trail blazers of this territory,



TRAVELING THE TRAILS

the vanguard of our civilization. To these unnamed heroes and heroines we owe a debt of gratitude that we can never pay.

These early settlers were frequently on the move. At night they slept by their camp fires, or very often in a cave. But when they came to a spot that appealed to them, they established their homes. The ax was brought forth and the trees felled. The logs were chipped on two sides and notched at both ends. These were laid one upon another, without the use of nails, and between the logs was placed mud and chips. This was called chinking. Clapboards were used for the roof. There was no glass in those days, and it is a question whether the oiled paper which was used in the windows admitted

Log
Cabins

much light. The interior was very crude. The great stone chimney which usually occupied the largest part of one end of the house was built on the outside against the house. In the winter, a great fire from huge logs roared and blazed up the deep throated chimney giving both heat and light. The door was of heavy boards, swung on great hickory hinges, and secured by a wooden latch. A thong of leather attached to this latch passed through a small hole in the door just above it. By means of this, the latch was raised. Hence the old saying, "The latch string is out," is an expression of welcome. Overhead was usually a loft, which could be reached either by a ladder or by wooden pins inserted one above another in the logs of the wall. The floor (when there was one) was formed of heavy slabs, the curved side laid upon the ground, and the upper side smoothed with the ax. The table was made of two or three slabs (according to the size of the family) with auger holes bored in the corners, into which four thin legs were thrust. The stools were made in like manner, though sometimes mere blocks or stumps of wood sufficed. The bed was usually built against the wall. The household dishes were usually wooden plates and platters. Drinking vessels were often dried gourd shells. For cooking there was one iron pot. A tin drinking cup was a rare and valued possession. Spoons were made either of wood or horn. Hunting and clasp, or pocket knives, were used for the table cutlery, and the saying that "fingers were made before forks" was justified by the common practice among the border cabins. A better type and quality of

Latch
String

Furniture

Cooking
Utensils

furnishings than these conferred distinction on the happy possessors.

Caravans

In the autumn, the settlers banded together and in caravan fashion carried the skins and furs they had procured through the year to the eastern and southern towns, where they were exchanged for the few indispensable groceries and other necessities. In the early days, salt was a very scarce article, and very costly. In Virginia, where some of the settlers travelled for supplies, the cost of a bushel of salt was a good cow and a calf.

For the most part, cultivated gardens, woods, and streams furnished the food. Sugar was made



OUTSIDE BAKE OVEN

from the sap of the maple tree. There was little baking done, as it is understood today. The beehive bake oven had not yet arrived, and, of course, there were no stoves. A kind of johnny cake or flap jack, as it was then called, was a mixture of a batter of meal, made into dough. This was baked on a griddle or flat stone, and turned over as in baking waffles. There was little fruit except of the wild variety. This scant variety of food was often reduced when the Indians were on the war path. However, it sustained these hardy and courageous folk in their strenuous life in the wild. This crude way of living was necessary on the part of these trail blazing men and women, as they wended their way westward, having no roads and no way of conveying their possessions except by packhorses or boats. When they decided to move on, they were ready to start in an hour or less. They took the few utensils, seeds, grains, skins, and furs, and loaded them on a boat or packhorse, and were off, with gun in hand, always on the alert for danger. They left the cabin and furniture for those who came over that trail later, or sometimes sold them for a mere pittance to a nearby settler who was not ready to move. A very good reason for the meagre furnishings was not only the scarcity of money but their homes were so often burned by the Indians.

Food

Moving
Day

The old log house was easily heated in winter on account of its thick walls, and just as easily kept cool in the summer. One of the original log houses has been preserved by the Daughters of the American Revolution at the corner of Negley and Penn



OXEN—THE PIONEER'S HELPER.



PICTURE BY THE AUTHOR,
TAKEN NEAR PITTSBURGH 1939

Avenues, Pittsburgh. It is open to the public, and is known as the "Old Forsythe Home." Such houses are rapidly disappearing, but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great number of the illustrious men and women were born and reared in such cabins. This type of house and its furnishings continued until about 1850.

Forsythe
Log House

It is interesting to remember that during this period the farming was done on a very limited scale. There were a few individuals who owned large tracts of land, most of which were covered with timber, but this was not the usual condition. There was not much demand for farm products, because all settlers had their own truck patch, or garden, and raised sufficient for their own needs. There were no facilities for transportation except the packhorse or flat boat; hence only those things that brought very high prices were transported, such as hides and furs.

Farming

There was a private school conducted in Pittsburgh about 1780, but mostly for young women. The younger children had their home duties, and little was done for them in the way of education aside from what their parents were able to impart. This in many cases was none at all, as many of the parents could neither read nor write. The boys, however, were trained in woodcraft and the use of the gun.

Three
R's

Most of the clothes for men and boys were made of buckskin, but some were made of homespun. Their caps were largely of coonskin or fur of some kind. Many men and boys wore the Indian moccasins for shoes, but high leather boots were also

Clothing

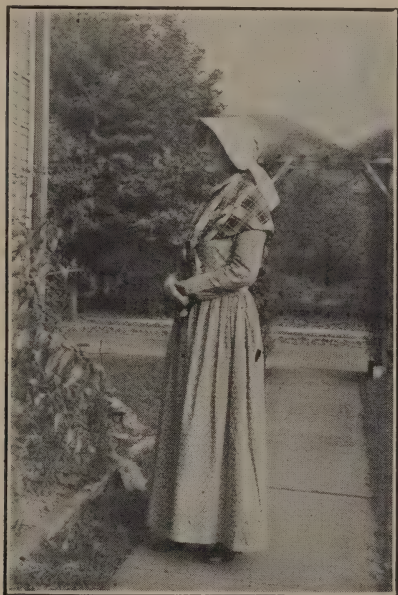


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—PITTSBURGH, PA.,
FOUNDED 1787



PROBABLY THE FIRST HOUSE BUILT IN WILKINSBURG,
SITUATED ABOUT 731 PENN AVE.

worn. The women wore much homespun, but some made clothing from deerskin also. Women wore the Indian moccasins and rough broadtoed shoes of the lace kind.



SUN BONNET, SHAWL AND DRESS.

So the years passed by, and the folks of the village went in and out, no longer disturbed by the war whoops of the Indians, and scarcely by anything else that would cause excitement. The domestic life took on a more peaceful and contented atmosphere. The fear that constantly haunted the very early settlers of the marauding

Final
Peace



POLE WATER LIFT




STONE BALLAST FARM GATE

band of Indians, the burning of their homes, or the fleeing for their lives was gone forever. Their tasks now were clearing the forest, tilling the soil, and compelling mother earth to yield them a return for the labor of their hands that would give them a feeling of contentment which comes to all who feel themselves well-fed, clothed, and housed. This mother earth did without stint for the soil was rich, timber plentiful, and the group spirit of helpfulness was splendid.

This is the stage setting together with the characters of the background of our story, because Pittsburgh is the structure out of which Wilkinsburg eventually grew. Its history goes back almost as far as Pittsburgh, and anything which affected the history of Pittsburgh, after it had taken on the importance of a trading center, and western frontier, in a more or less degree, affected the village of Wilkinsburg.

CHAPTER TWO.

FOUNDING A VILLAGE

T HAS always been considered difficult to found a village with any hope of stability or growth unless it be founded on a stream of water. The exception to this rule is usually because of some natural wonder; a place of historical interest, such as a battlefield, or where two important highways cross. Yet Wilkinsburg, the largest borough in the state of Pennsylvania, does not have a stream worthy of the name. Nine Mile Run is of no value for any practical purpose, even at high tide. Neither has nature been any more considerate in selecting this location for a battlefield. Nor can it be rightfully claimed that it is the natural outgrowth of a great expanding city, for its history began almost as soon as that of Pittsburgh. The older citizens will remember that there were great stretches of unoccupied land between Wilkinsburg district and the city. These open spaces existed for many years. It is, therefore, necessary to seek elsewhere for the reason of the beginning of this village and its steady growth to the enviable position which it now rightfully holds among the boroughs, as the largest of them all.

On a clear day from any point near Graham's Athletic Field on Penn Avenue one can get a magnificent view of the valley below. Westward lies

East Liberty. From the clearing on top of the hill above the Bridge over Fern Hollow in Frick Park can be seen all of Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Swissvale, Rankin, and part of Homestead, and Braddock. Looking down upon the scene in the early days when it was yet fields of growing grain with but a house or two, it was a beautiful valley, nestling among four hills, none of which could be even called rugged; and out from among them all, as it were, were gateways leading eastward, westward, northward, and southward. Had it possessed that one priceless thing—a beautiful stream of water, the scene would have been one for the eyes of the gods. Anyone visiting this spot on the Sabbath Day will find a number of people with or without fieldglasses enjoying the view. No one comes away disappointed.

Frick
Park

Nestles
Among
Hills

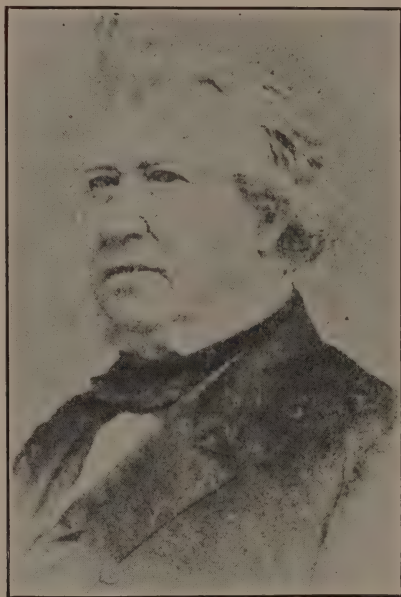
An examination of the county map will show the great road (now Penn Avenue) running eastward, and a logical road to Braddock, branching off just before it ascends Penn Avenue Hill. This was an old Indian trail leading to the Frankstown road, and has become the connecting link between these settlements. It was later called Water Street, when the village was first founded, but is now called Swissvale Avenue. At this crossroad there were founded a blacksmith shop, a grist mill, a store, and a post office. It is not certain when these were established, but the first record of the post office is 1840. The others were established much earlier.

Old Trail

It is interesting to follow the steps that lead to the naming of this village, Wilkinsburg. This was not its first name. A family of traders named

Rippeyville

Rippey once lived here and the locality was named Rippeyville because they so dominated the life of the community. Another reason for this name is that Samuel A. Rippey and his wife conducted the earliest tavern in the village. Mrs. Rippey was a sister of Dunning McNair. Mr. and Mrs. Rippey



COL. DUNNING McNAIR,
FOUNDER OF WILKINSBURG

located in this vicinity prior to the coming of Mr. McNair, and Mr. McNair stayed at their tavern on his arrival here. The late Burgess James Horner claimed that William Thompson gave it this name, Rippeyville, prior to 1788. For some

reason or other, this name did not live in the hearts of the people. It is safe to say that the reason lay in the changing order of things, and the coming of other outstanding figures. The second attempt was the name McNair Town, or McNairsville, called after Colonel Dunning McNair, whose personality dominated the community from the time he purchased his first land in 1788 until the year of his financial failure,—1824. Mr. McNair laid out the first plan of lots about 1790.

McNair
Town

¹Colonel Dunning McNair was born in West Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, July 23, 1762. After his father's death, he aided his mother in settling his father's estate, for which he received sixteen pounds sterling. On April 6, 1786, he married Ann Stuart, who was the daughter of Col. George Stuart and Margaret Harrie Stuart. The Stuarts lived on the adjoining farm in Milford Township, Cumberland (now Juniata) County, Pennsylvania, near what is now called Doyle's Mills. Soon after his marriage, he moved to what is now Wilkinsburg, where in January 1787 his first child was born. Probably part of the money used in purchasing land near Pittsburgh was furnished by his mother, whose maiden name was Dunning. The Dunnings were richer than the McNairs. Colonel McNair bought and sold land in what is now Butler County, then Pitt Township, Allegheny County. He was also manager for the Pittsburgh and Greensburg Turnpike. He served two terms in the legislature, 1794 and 1799, as a representative from Allegheny County. He was elected to the legislature at the age of thirty-

Colonel
McNair

Dunnings

1.—McNair Genealogies by James McNair.

two, about twelve years after he came to this district, and was re-elected for the second term. Neither Washington, D. C., nor Harrisburg have any record of Colonel McNair serving in the Revolutionary War. There is a record that he was Lieutenant-Colonel-Commandant of the Second Regiment of the Brigade of Militia in Allegheny County August 19, 1793, which is further proof of his popularity.

Colonel McNair built a house on the Penn Avenue Hill, then called the Great Road, about 1788, and Tradition has it that he gave it the name of the "Crow's Nest", meaning, no doubt, the top shelter at the masthead of a ship, or at least carrying with it the thought of a high altitude overlooking the village. He lived there only a short time, for in 1790 he built Dumpling Hall. This was considered a mansion in those early days. Tradition has it that Rippeyville at this time was changed to McNair Town and later to McNairsville. As Colonel McNair owned almost everything in sight, the change of name was very natural.

Colonel McNair was in no sense a wealthy man, as we consider wealth today, or hardly well-to-do. This is evident by the size of the mortgage (\$22,362.50) which he gave to the Pennsylvania Population Co. on his land. While he owned a couple of thousand acres or more, it is well to remember that land sold in those days at from \$1.00 to \$3.00 an acre. Those who profess to know say that he was worth about \$35,000.00, and belonged to the class of Land Gentry. This was a title of distinction, and the possessor was regarded as a rich man. Not

Crow's
Nest

Dumpling
Hall

only rich, but he was also an aristocrat. He did no manual labor, but possessed slaves, fast horses, hunting dogs, and guns. In short, he lived the life



DUMPLING HALL—ERECTED BY COL. DUNNING McNAIR—
ABOUT 1790—RAZED ABOUT 1905—HOME OF DUNNING
McNAIR AND JAMES KELLY.

of a country gentleman, entertaining lavishly.

The interior of his home is described as having hardwood floors, curiously carved old mantel pieces as high as a man's head, and deep fire places. Fronting the house were large grass grounds and high posted gateways with deep, wide iron gates. A large frame addition was added some years afterward, to Dumpling Hall, which added to its spaciousness and grandeur. Its mistress was then

Furnishings

Mrs.
McNair

the first lady of the village. She is described in these words, "Nor was Col. Dunning McNair's wife, though more religious, one whit behind him in elegance, refinement, and the spirit of hospitality." Her daughter, Mrs. Steele, writes, "She was tall, dark haired, had gray eyes and a fair complexion, and had an expressive face." She very frequently rode horseback to Alexandria, Tuscarora County, which was her home. There are other references which would lead one to believe that she was a strong character. We also find that Col. Dunning McNair was interested in affairs of a literary character, for when the Beulah Librarian Society was organized in 1814 he became a charter member. He was also a member of Beulah Presbyterian Church.

Colonel McNair built Dumpling Hall in the year 1790 at the corner of what is now Hay and Kelly Streets. It was for many years the most pretentious house in the village. It was built of cobble stones, no doubt secured from the Allegheny River somewhere near Verona, and hauled across the hills. It was given this singular name, no doubt, because it resembled dumplings. A lane led down to it from the pike, now Penn Avenue, following the course of Hay Street. Several small stone cabins for the slaves were built in the rear, and faced the kitchen door. Here they lived, and served the McNair family. Dumpling hall was torn down about the year 1905. Tradition states the Colonel McNair conducted the first school in Dumpling Hall for his own family, but later permitted other children of the village to attend. He was living in

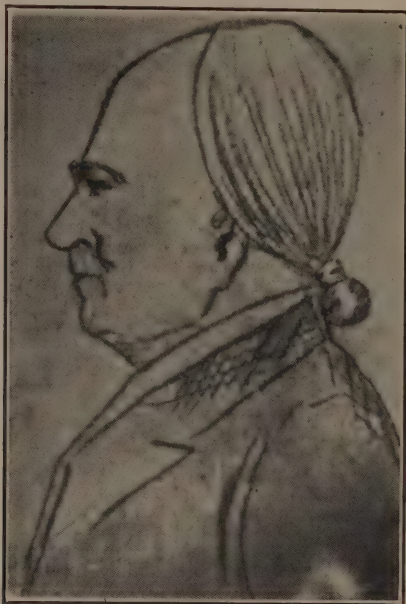
Colonel
McNair's
Death

this house when his financial difficulties came upon him in 1824. He then assigned all his property to the Pennsylvania Population Co., but continued to live in the Hall until the time of his death, in November 1825. He was buried at Beulah, the Rev. J. M. Hastings officiating at the funeral. On his tomb stone is the following inscription,—“Colonel Dunning McNair, Founder of Wilkinsburg.”

2“After the death of her husband, Mrs. McNair moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where she made her home with her daughter, Mrs. Steele. Mrs. McNair died December 24, 1837, and is buried in Cove Hill Cemetery in that city. There were five sons and two daughters born to Mr. and Mrs. Dunning McNair. The sons were David, David Stewart, George Harris, Robert Dunning, and John Wilkins Washington McNair. Anna Maria and Margaret Jane Harris were the daughters.

There comes into prominence at this time (1825) a man who dominated the life of the village for about half a century. This was James Kelly, who was born on the north side of the Allegheny river, near Verona, in the year 1794. He was a man of about five feet ten inches in height, and weighed about 175 pounds. He was smooth shaven, and wore his hair in a queue. Tradition states that his long hair was accounted for by an election bet. He wagered that if a certain man were not elected, he would never cut his hair. He lost the bet, and he was never known to cut his hair thereafter. He was a man of strong convictions and great courage. His education was extremely limited, covering a period of only a few months. He seemed to have

been a dreamer of better days for himself and the community, as is evidenced by his liberality in giving his land for churches, homes for the aged,



JAMES KELLY
Born Oct. 31, 1794
Died Sept. 29, 1882

Once her foremost citizen and perhaps her greatest benefactor

and schools. Yet he does not seem to have identified himself with any church, though Mr. Thomas Russell stated that he leaned strongly to the Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters). He could not join them because he believed in voting and they did not. He had high ideals, as is evidenced by his advocating local prohibition of the liquor

traffic, and he had his own workmen carry a petition around in 1879 to make this territory dry.

One service which Wilkinsburg has never forgotten is his fight for the integrity of the borough. When Pittsburgh annexed our village as an eastern ward about 1871, James Kelly singlehanded, at his own expense, carried the fight to the state supreme court and recovered the old name again. When the first school was built, he provided the money. Prior to this, he opened Dumpling Hall, where he had a private school for his own family, to the children of the community, as McNair done before him. Mr. Russell stated that although many were in debt from time to time to Mr. Kelly, and some never paid their indebtedness, yet he was never known to sue anyone. He was a man of a fixed purpose. When he set himself to accomplish a task, he went through with it to the bitter end. He had marked qualities of leadership but was badly handicapped because of his limited education. During his life, he purchased practically all the land of Dunning McNair, including Dumpling Hall. Had he possessed the education and culture of Mr. McNair, it would seem as though his disastrous financial crash would have been averted. Yet, even with this handicap, he has left a very creditable record.

James Kelly comes into the picture first in 1824, in which year he purchased his first land. McNair was still living. His next large purchase was in 1833 from Mark Collet, amounting to 1,800 acres. There were others in between and later until he acquired immense holdings. He seems to have

Wilkinsburg
Annexed

James
Kelly
Recovers
Our Name

A Leader

James
Kelly
Land
Barron

followed the plan of mortgaging one piece to buy another. He was not only interested in acquiring land, but also in anything else of any importance in the village and surrounding country; so that he became such a power in the community that nothing was attempted without his sanction, either in politics or business. When the Swissvale Car Works were built, he was one of the large stockholders. When a planing mill was built, he again was interested. He was also associated with John Wilkins in the lime business. He was a trustee of the Allegheny County Work House, and superintended part of the erection. But all of his ventures were not successful. Indeed few of them were. He loaned much money and took many notes and mortgages, but was careless in recording them. In this way he lost much money; but being recognized as a wealthy land owner, no one attempted to sue him. When absolutely necessary he borrowed, and for many years was able to meet the interest.

Money
Lender

During the Civil War it was very difficult for him to carry on, but he succeeded not because he was in any better financial condition, but because he was still able to borrow further on his holdings. In this way, he was able to stave off the coming financial crash until about the beginning of the year 1879. At this time the financial clouds hung very low over Mr. Kelly. He had lost heavily when the Swissvale Car Works burned, and again when the planing mill was sold at sheriff's sale, and as bondsman for the postmaster of Pittsburgh, who was short in his accounts. He had borrowed heavily from the Pittsburgh National Bank of Commerce

Financial
Storms

and the Dollar Savings Bank, and these banks were pressing him to meet his obligations, which he could not do. His taxes were very heavy and a good deal of his land was idle. If Mr. Kelly had only put on the market some of these lots, (as the banks did later) he might have saved himself, for when they were put on sale, they sold very rapidly.

Mr. Kelly was now an old man and in failing health. His step was no longer steady. Those steel gray eyes which once seemed to pierce men were now dim with age. These financial troubles weighed on him heavily. As the threatening storm came closer, the old man gazed upon the impending disaster as one dazed, yet he struggled as a drowning man grasping at straws. He had mortgaged everything he had, and now in the hour of his need he had nothing left to secure further loans to postpone his certain financial ruin.

On or about November 1, 1879, the terrible blow fell. The fortune which cost him a lifetime of toil was swept from him, crushing him to the earth from which he was never again able to rise. Be it said to the honor of his creditors that they permitted him to spend the balance of his days in his beloved Dumpling Hall. Here he lingered for a little over two years, although he showed no interest in life, and in the month of September 1882, when the leaves were taking on their golden hue and when life itself seemed ebbing from the earth, James Kelly gathered his robes around him and fell asleep.

Falls

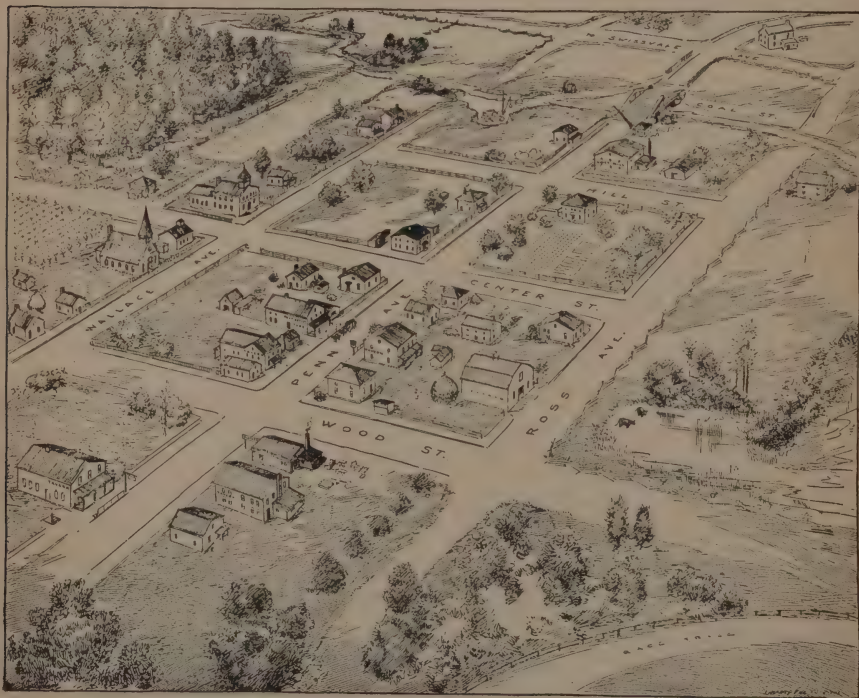
Stricken

Death

Thus Wilkinsburg lost her foremost and perhaps her noblest citizen. His vision was splendid. He

Vision
Splendid

seemed to dream of a town that would be unique. He labored himself and sent one of his employees (Thomas Russell) with the first petition to make it a dry town. It was to be a religious town, and to that end he donated ground for the majority, perhaps all, of the churches up to the time of his death. He thought of the aged and unfortunate, donating ground for homes for them, and these are now flourishing in our midst. He had within his grasp



ARTIST'S SKETCH—WILKINSBURG IN 1840—MEMORY
OF WM. TURNER, SR.

and control what might have been a mighty fortune, but it passed from him. All his land cost him but a few thousand dollars, yet Wilkinsburg's valuation today is more than thirty-two million dollars. He lived for more than three score years and saw his town grow, but only after it had passed into the hands of others. As he approached four score years, his dreams were shattered, and his plans came tumbling down upon him like a house of cards. He wrought well for others, but could not save himself.

Wilkinsburg owes much to this man's memory for he did more than any other in preparing the ground work for her foundation, which has enabled her to build strong and powerful, giving her a unique place among all the boroughs of the state. He died a poor man and is buried in the Churchyard at Beulah where his grave receives little, if any, attention.

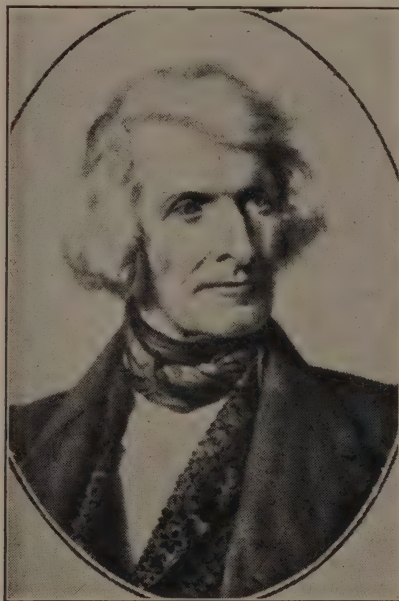
Our
Greatest
Benefactor

The present name of Wilkinsburg was the third effort to give the borough a distinctive place in the community. It is not certain when it took place, but it must have been some time before 1812. September 15, 1812, McNair sold two lots, Nos. 27 and 28 General Plan, in Wilkinsburg to Patrick Green. In 1813 Dunning McNair conveyed a piece of ground to a purchaser, "excepting a certain lot in Wilkinsburg." There is no doubt that it traces back to the two Wilkins families who had a prominent place in the history of this section. Some claim it was John Wilkins, who was a man of good character, but of a retiring disposition. He does not appear to have held office, or to have been prominent in any movements of a public character,

First
Record
Wilkinsburg

Judge
Wilkins

nor to have been of a philanthropic disposition. A more probable explanation is that it was named after his brother, William, for whom the township was named. William Wilkins was not only a



JUDGE WILLIAM WILKINS

Born Dec. 20, 1779, Carlisle, Pa.—Died June 23, 1865—Wilkinsburg was named after him.

judge, but was the first president of the Bank of Pittsburgh, and prominent in politics, and the social affairs of the county. He served in the state legislature in 1820 and was elected to the United States Senate in 1831. He was minister to Russia, Secretary of War under President Tyler, and served in the State Senate in 1855. He died June

23, 1865, shortly after the close of the Civil War, and was buried from the old Mansion. This is confirmed by Mr. Francis S. Guthrie, a descendant of Judge Wilkins, who states that it has always been understood in the family that the town was named after William Wilkins.

History teaches us that the first sign of permanence of a community is the presence of the Church. The Wilkinsburg district is no exception to this rule, for one of the oldest churches west of the Allegheny mountains was organized near here on October 20, 1784. Its first name was Bull Pens. In 1785 it was renamed Pitt's Township, and in 1804 it received the name of Beulah Presbyterian Church, which it holds to this day. The first name, Bull Pens, was derived from the place where the government kept cattle for the army. Before the building was erected, the preaching was done in the open. The first supply was Reverend Clark, and while others followed, their names have not been preserved. In the year of 1785 the Presbytery of Redstone changed this unseemly name to Pitt's Township. After the completion of the building, the congregation called Reverend Samuel Barr of New Castle, Pennsylvania, on December 20, 1785. He accepted the call, but did not take charge until 1787. The first elder was James Milligan, who lived on what is now Squirrel Hill. He died in 1809 at the age of 83 years, and was buried at Beulah. Reverend Barr only remained a few years. The pulpit was vacant for a short time, but on April 10, 1804, Reverend James Graham accepted a call. He labored very acceptably for

Old Beulah
Church

Rev.
Graham

forty-one years, until on June 12, 1845, at the age of seventy, he was thrown from a horse and received injuries which caused his death. He was buried at Beulah. Reverend Graham was a fine scholar, a splendid preacher, and a man of unblemished character and reputation. He left his mark for good on this community as no other man has done. From his congregation there have come men and women who have helped to make history in this end of the state. Not only did they wield an influence for good over the youth of the early forties, who afterwards became citizens of the village, but they also shaped the community life in such a way that we are sharing the privileges of their labor.

In the early days the center of all life was the



BEULAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—
ORGANIZED 1784

Church. It assumed the leadership of the community, so that Beulah became the center of everything social or literary. The Spelling Bees and the Debating Societies had not yet arrived. In fact, these early settlers did not have much time for entertainment. They were engaged in clearing the forest, in making a living, and in developing new country, yet the hunger and thirst for knowledge and recreation is quite manifest from the ³Beulah Librarian Society which was organized as early as 1814. It would seem from the number of charter members that all the people of the community were behind the enterprise. These were:

Beulah
Social
Centre

Beulah
Librarian
Society

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Dunning McNair | William Monero |
| James Graham | James D. Beason |
| Charles Johnston | Edward Cox |
| James Johnston | John Johnston |
| William McCrea, Sr. | Daniel Henderson |
| William McCrea, Jr. | Thomas Sampson |
| John McCrea | John Sampson |
| Samuel McCrea | William Parks |
| Samuel Fleming | William Lawson |
| Samuel Snodgrass | James Irwin |
| William Sharo | John Means |
| David Little | William McCullough |
| David Irwin | John McDonald |
| William McCall | Charles Bonner |
| Ephraim Jordan | James Horner |
| James Such | William Duff |
| Robert Johnson | Alex McMun |
| Lewis Hatfield | Joseph Reed |
| Alex Thompson | Henry Morrow |
| The society was financed by the sale of shares at | |

\$2.50 each. It was necessary to own one share to be a member of the society. Books which were out over sixty days cost six cents a week, and anyone who lost a book had to pay for it. If the book was part of a set, the loser took the balance and bought a new set. The annual dues were \$1.00, limited to two years. If a book was loaned to a non-member the fine was 25c. Alex Thomas was secretary, James Graham the librarian, and William Patterson the purchaser of the books. Perhaps this was the first attempt on the Western frontier to start a library.

At this time there were no railroads, and Pittsburgh contained about two hundred homes. It is easier to understand the stories of Abraham Lincoln walking five and six miles to obtain or return a book if they are seen in the light of Beulah's beginnings, and if the meaning of these few books to the early settlers is kept in mind. How many of these families lived in Wilkinsburg we do not know, but we are sure that the Horner and McKelvey families mentioned by Mrs. Jane Grey Swisshelm are direct descendents of those given in the records of Beulah. It will also be noted that some of the oldest families living here in 1840 according to her list bear the same names as those given in the list of 1814. Mrs. Jane Grey Swisshelm gives the following list of names as the oldest families in 1840. She lived here at that time.

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| James Horner | William Fleming |
| James Swisshelm | Robert Dixon |
| James McKelvey | Col. William G. Hankins |
| John McKelvey | John Perchmont |

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| George Johnston | Peter Perchmont |
| Rev. James Graham | Capt. James Johnston |
| Hon. William Wilkins | James Graham |
| John Wilkins | Robert Graham |
| William Peebles | Col. Minier |

It will be interesting to many to have a list of the first merchants as they are handed down by some of the older records. Abraham Stoner, Samuel McCrea, Edward Thompson, Charles Carothers, and James Turner were the first merchants. There is no way of telling when the business of any of them was established. Samuel McCrea's name is on the old records of Beulah in 1814, and he is probably the first. Some of the first craftsmen were:

Crafts

| | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| Hugh Thompson | _____ | miller |
| David Lytle | _____ | carpenter |
| George Johnston | _____ | wagonmaker |
| J. Smith Lacock | _____ | blacksmith |
| John Simmers | _____ | butcher |
| Samuel Meyler | _____ | chairmaker |
| William Minter | _____ | carpet weaver |
| William Creelman | _____ | bag weaver |
| Thomas Steele | _____ | tavern keeper |
| James Carothers | _____ | physician |
| David Kuhn | _____ | physician |
| John Semple | _____ | physician |
| James Horner | _____ | first Justice of the Peace |
| N. B. Hatch | _____ | } first teachers |
| Harvey Nelson | _____ | |
| James Graham | _____ | clergyman |

It is quite probable that most of these mechanics came to Wilkinsburg around 1825 or later.

Wilkins
Mansion

"The old Judge Wilkins mansion" as it is usually called, has wielded such an influence in the past, though not a part of the village or borough, that we can not pass it without a brief reference. It was built about the year 1836 and torn down in 1924. In early days it was considered one of the most pretentious houses in this end of the state.



JUDGE WILLIAM WILKINS MANSION ERECTED 1836, RAZED 1924.
SOUTH EDGERTON AND MURLAND AVENUES

The house was two stories high, and was built of brick and stone. Four great white pillars supported the roof, which extended out over the wall, making a deep porch running partway across the front. The windows on the west wing were very deep, reaching the floor. The east wing contained the dining room and kitchen. The entire interior had marks of the elegance of that day. The house was situated in a grove of oaks about three blocks square, and was bounded by what are now Reynolds, Dallas and South Murtland Avenues. A lane led from Penn Avenue to the house lined on either side by maples which are still standing. The lane was once known as Coleman's lane, and is now South Murtland Street. In 1920 parts of marble statues could be seen lying in the weeds in the rear of the house. These had once been used on the lawn. The ruins of the slave cabins were also to be seen. Here the judge entertained his political friends, and also those of financial importance in the surrounding country and city.

The passing of these old mansions in this or any other community brings a pull at the heartstrings of all those who have learned to love them for the standards of elegance and beauties of architecture which they once embodied. In these later days we seem to have such a mania for modern things that we lay hands on these beautiful, old, moss-covered shrines and pull them down as though they were pig stys instead of being landmarks which bear testimony that they were here when the nation was young. Then men and women walked through them and about them with a love

and admiration that was beautiful. They set a standard in a day when most things were common, crude, and ugly. Not alone for the preservation of these beautiful old mansions would we plead, but that we might honor those who set the pace in the past and who blazed the way toward the more beautiful in architecture and landscape gardening. Such places are but the fruit of their imagination and the work of their hands. One longs for the day when a love for the beautiful will be a community sentiment and the destruction of such places will not be permitted. The preservation of one or more such places in a community as shrines of the past will help to conserve pride, and will be milestones in the history of aesthetic achievements.

Property
Valuations,
Taxes

In this connection it will be well to give a comparative statement of the value of property and possessions. It will increase our appreciation of what we have today. These old records are taken from the duplicate Valuation and Tax Book of Pine Township, Allegheny County, in 1809. Pine Township then lay northeast of Sharpsburg, coming down and taking in part of what is now Etna.

Robert Anderson

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|
| 200 acres of land | ----- | value \$400.00 |
| 1 horse | ----- | 20.00 |
| 1 cow | ----- | 7.00 |

427.00 Tax \$1.07

Andrew Boggs

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 30 acres of land | -----value \$520.00 |
| 200 acres of land | ----- 400.00 |
| 1 slave | ----- 60.00 |
| 2 cows | ----- 14.00 |
| 4 oxen | ----- 60.00 |
| 2 sawmills | ----- 125.00 |
| 1 horse | ----- 20.00 |

1,199.00 Tax \$2.97

John Morrow

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 80 acres of land | -----value \$240.00 |
| 2 houses | ----- 40.00 |
| 3 cows | ----- 21.00 |
| 2 oxen | ----- 36.00 |
| 1 distillery | ----- 70.00 |

307.00 Tax \$1.00

Now let us place side by side with this the tax valuation of an ordinary dwelling house in Wilkinsburg today. It shows that taxes have increased much over seven hundred per cent.

John Doe—Wilkinsburg

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 house—8 rooms | ----value \$4,000.00 |
| 1 garage—1 car | ----- 500.00 |
| 1 lot, size 60x120 | ----- 4,000.00 |

8,500.00 Tax \$227.00

SHOES—BOOTS—CLOTHING

It is always easier to understand the life of a people if we know something about their customs and

habits, so a word about the wearing apparel of those early settlers may help to create the picture. The dresses of the women were largely of the homespun variety, and came down below the shoe tops. For headcovering, they had hoods which were knit or made of fur, and which covered the head completely. The severe snowstorms and the biting cold winds when the thermometer touched zero made such garments more of a necessity than a style. The women used great shawls as additional garments for outdoor wear. They wore heavy lace shoes. Men's long trousers appeared about 1820, and were made of homespun and buckskin. They also wore fur and wool caps which could be pulled down over the ears and about the neck. Their high leather boots were decorated with blue and red tops. The low shoes were seldom worn. A



LEATHER BOOTS—WORN IN CIVIL WAR

curiosity in the year 1926 would be what was known in the very early days as a boot jack. It was a very necessary article in every household then. It was a strip of wood about two feet long and four inches wide. One end was nailed to a small block of wood, which served to raise the end off the floor about four inches. A spear head was cut in the end, and the heel of the boot inserted, and the boots were thus removed without stooping.

Both men and women wore fur and woolen mittens, and long scarfs which were six inches wide and one and one-half yards long knitted in several colors. The children were dressed like their parents. At first the women had no pockets in their garments, but they had a separate recepticle made like a pocket which they fastened about the waist under the outer garment. Later, these were worn outside, and finally they were made in the dresses themselves. This style continued until the early eighties, although the handbag and the beaded bag appeared as early as 1825. Neither did the men have so many pockets in those days. Of course, their need was not so great, because money was scarce and pocket trinkets were rare. The numerous pockets for men have come along with the march of civilization. Today they must have a pocket for the watch, one for the knife, the nail clips, the note book, and what not. Women's trinkets have increased as much, so that she has to carry a hand bag or a small suit case. In the summer, the dress was the same except that the knitted and fur hoods gave place to caps of light weight

material for the women, while home-made straw hats were worn by the men. For Sundays they wore a large brimmed Quaker-like hat.

Farming

Farming was conducted on a small scale. It was carried on chiefly to supply the personal needs of the family. The citizens of Pittsburgh, the largest village, as well as the nearest, lived in homes which were built on large plots of ground. These were laid out as gardens, small fruit orchards, and vineyards. They also kept pigs and chickens, so that each family was selfsustaining, raising all the necessary food except grain. The small amount of grain grown by the farmers was sufficient for their needs and for the town folks, but the greater part of the land was given to the raising of sheep, cattle and horses; the cattle hides were used for leather, the sheep for wool, and the horses mainly for transportation. Wilkinsburg being exclusively a country village looked to the larger town for the disposal of any of her surplus.

The Old Village

The reader will keep in mind that this village had only one street. This one street was the Pike, now Penn Avenue. Almost all the houses were built along it, except an old log house on the side of the hill up the lane, now Center Street, and another below the pike, down the lane, near what is now the corner of Mill and Ross Streets. Dumpling Hall was down in the field, now Kelly and Hay Streets; and another was out the public road, the present Wood Street, at about what is now the corner of Wood Street and Singer Place. This is a picture of the village as it existed from 1800 to 1835. The rest of the land was fields and woods, covered with

large timber. The change in the village indicated in the cut shown elsewhere in the book was made between 1835 and 1850, and after James Kelly purchased the McNair holdings.

The first post office was established in 1840. Prior

First
Post Office

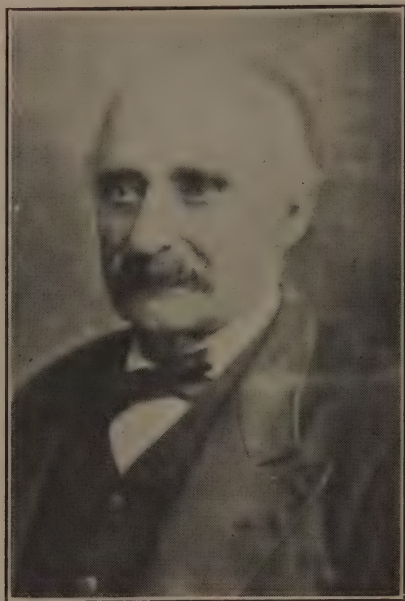


ABRAM STONER'S GENERAL STORE—FIRST
POST OFFICE ESTABLISHED HERE 1840

to this there is no record of how the early settlers got their mail. In July 1786 the first stage coach mail route was established between Pittsburgh, New York, and Virginia. The meeting place was Bedford, Pennsylvania. It seems quite probable that the mail for the people of this district was addressed to Pittsburgh, with the name of the village on it, and the stage coach driver dropped it off, and collected it, as he passed through. It was the custom in the fifties and sixties, and even later, for any person who went to town from a settlement to bring the mail for all the neighbors. Very few letters

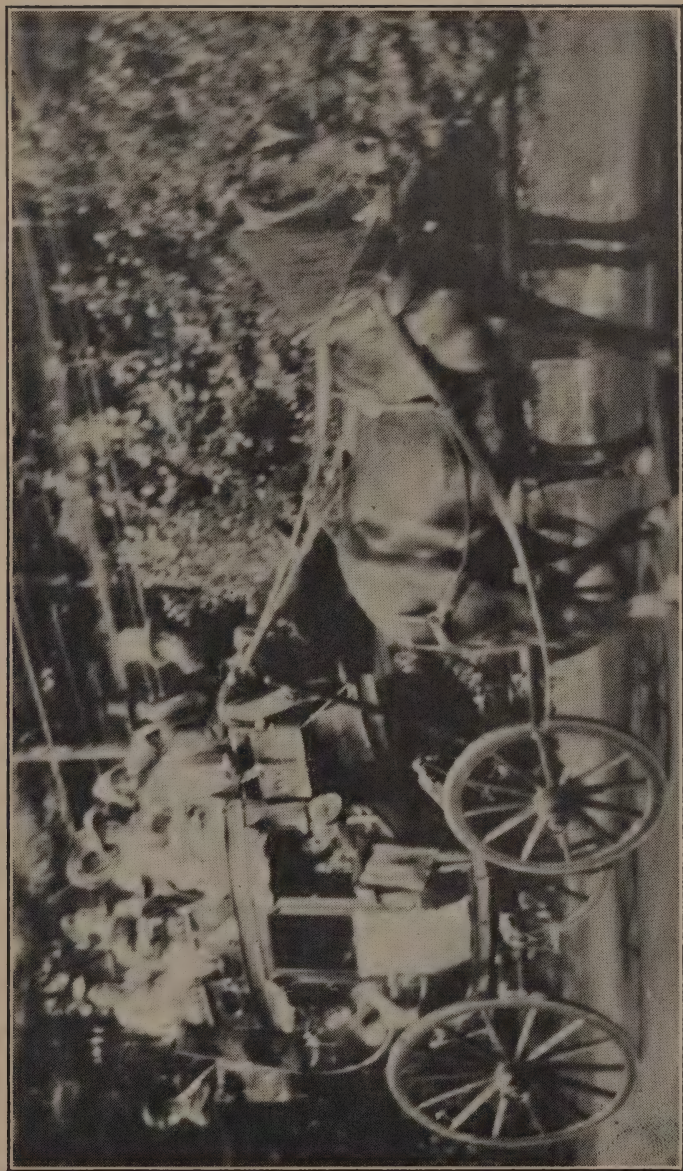
Three R's

were written because the great majority of the people could neither read nor write. As there were few papers and magazines, at no time was the



ABRAM STONER—
FIRST POSTMASTER 1840

bringing of the mail by an accommodating neighbor a burdensome task. When anyone in the neighborhood was wealthy enough to receive the county paper or any other, like the YOUTH'S COMPANION, it was passed on to those who could read, and they in turn read it to their household and neighbors who could not read. It was no small accomplishment to be able to read and write in those early days.



STAGE COACH ABOUT 1810—1850

Stage
Coach

The stage coach used in the early days was rather a queer looking affair when contrasted with the vehicles of today. It was a small house on four wheels, two in the rear about five and one-half feet high, and two smaller ones in front about four feet high, and between these the little house was swung, with the driver, passengers, and a place for luggage on top and in the rear. It had two doors, and would hold six passengers inside, and the same number or more on top. It was usually drawn by four horses, especially in mountainous country. It made considerable noise as it bumped along over the bad roads, and its screeching brakes, coming down the mountain and hillsides, announced its coming before it was in sight.

The arrival and departure of the stage never ceased to be of interest to most people of the village. It was the only way of travel overland except by private conveyance, on horseback, or foot. The driver was always questioned as to what was new at both ends of the line, for he only was in touch with the outside world. He obtained from the driver at the eastern end of his trip as well as from the passengers some news of what was going on east of the Alleghenies. Travel by stage coach was pleasant in the summer or fall, except for the roughness of the road, and many of the passengers rode on the top with the driver. The stage was very often from half a day to a day late in its arrival, due to storms in the mountains, when trees were often blown down across the road. The driver must then take his ax, cut such a tree in pieces, and drag it out of the way before he could proceed. A

rifle was part of the stage equipment also, and sometimes an additional guard, if money was being transported. In the winter travel was very uncomfortable for the passengers, and torture for the driver and horses. Three feet of snow was a common fall, and it lay for weeks. The mountain passes would drift shut, and many times the driver must shovel through, or out.

Notwithstanding these hardships, there was a compensation to those who had eyes to see the beauty of the landscape carpeted with two or three feet of beautiful, glistening snow. It clung to the branches of the trees, and as one peered into an orchard or forest, it was not unlike the cobwebs on a dewy morning. It was a tangle and crisscross of branches of white. The red birds and snow birds whistled, chirped, and flew from limb to limb, shaking off the snow, and giving the scene the effect of an enchanted forest. The roofs of houses, barns and sheds would be stacked high with silvery snow, and a lovely white blanket covered everything that was ugly, and transformed it into a thing of beauty. In fancy, one can see the darkness settling down, and with it comes the cold frosty air that makes the snow crunch under the feet of the pedestrians. The moon is coming up from behind yonder hill, shedding her golden rays down over this glistening white carpet as far as eye can reach. The dogs begin their baying at the moon, and their long sustained howls, echo from hill to hill in the deep stillness of the night, until one feels a tingle of loneliness, but only for a moment. In the distance may be heard the deep throated sleighbells, and presently

*Charm of
Nature*

down the hill comes a big two horse bob sled full of youth of the country side, and as they glide past over the frozen snow, one hears peals of laughter or song, which fade away in the distance as the sound of the bells grows fainter. How the snow glistens, and the lights twinkle in the homes in the distance! How lovely the picture! It causes one to linger lovingly in memory over the picture of the days of our youth.

Ox Teams

This period witnessed the constant use of the ox



*TRANSPORTATION IN YESTERYEAR

team and Conestoga wagon. The accompanying cut portrays both. They moved very slowly, and carried with them all the earthly belongings of the travellers. When questioned whither they were bound, the reply was usually,—“To the far west,—Ohio.” How far away those states and towns seemed in that day to those using such slow moving

*Picture loaned by Jack Horrel.

means of transportation. The plow was usually swung under the wagon, and the few other implements, household goods, and the family were inside. Sometimes one family had two wagons. These "Westward, Ho!" people often stopped over night here at one of the taverns. When questioned, they did not always know exactly where they were going, except to settle on some free or cheap land in what they called the far west. Such courage and self sacrifice have never ceased to be an inspiration to the writer, especially as they were manifested by the women.

Westward
Ho

At this time, 1840, there were no railroads, no telegraph, no telephones. Penn Avenue was the Pike. Swissvale Avenue was called Water Street. Nine Mile Run flowed diagonally across Coal Street near the old grist mill. The old toll gate was located on the eastern side of the bridge over the run. Wood Street was a township road, and the lower end of Wallace Avenue was called Horner's Lane. Hay Street was called Kelly's Lane,—James Kelly lived in Dumpling Hall, and the lane led down to his house from the pike.

Toll Gate

In former days taverns were important in village life. They were established very early in the history of our country, and, like the church, wherever two or three were gathered in a settlement there was the church in their midst, also the tavern. It followed the Church and civilization wherever they led with a remarkable degree of faithfulness. In the early days it did not have the stigma upon it that has always been associated with the open saloon in more modern times.

Taverns

Some of the descendants of those who conducted the old taverns are today the pillars in many of the churches in this end of the state, as elsewhere. Webster defines it as "A licensed house for sale of liquors with accommodations for travellers." It is interesting to contrast it with the definition of hotel which is usually associated with it in thought at least; the latter being defined as "A house for the accommodation of strangers."

It is still further of interest to notice that religious meetings were held in these taverns in the early days, as they are in the hotels of modern days.

The old taverns were also called road houses, and were given this name because they were scattered along the turnpike about half a day's journey by stage or Conestoga wagon. One could be fairly sure of getting a drink of good liquor and good meals, but not always; some of the old writers say that the good liquor was in abundance, but the other accommodations most miserable. Charles Dickens, the famous English novelist, was one of our most severe critics in the early days.

The
Commons

There was associated with the tavern a place known as the commons, easily recognized by the older ones as well as those in middle life as a place to tie your team, hold a small circus, or a picnic, or for public gatherings of any kind. On these commons the prairie schooners (conestoga wagons) were parked for the night with their team of sixes.

Conestoga
Wagons

The Pittsburgh Gazette's issue of January 27, 1816, gives an account of Alex Thompson who kept record of 5,800 road wagons passing his farm in one year. He lived four and a half miles from

Pittsburgh on the great road, which places him close to or perhaps at the toll gate of Wilkinsburg. The record must have been kept at some such place. In 1817 there were 12,000. Another record is one of 52 Conestoga wagons in an unbroken line headed westward for Pittsburgh. When we remember that practically all of these teamsters received accommodations at these wayside taverns, as well as provender for their teams, it will be seen that the proprietor's task was no mean one.

The passengers on the stage coach and mail had to be taken care of also, which added to their labor. The problem was so different from that of a hotel or restaurant today when it has a large number of people descend upon it for dinner or supper. At such times it merely goes to the telephone and calls up the butcher, baker, and grocer and places an order—in the tavern days there was no telephone, butcher, or baker. Most of these taverns had their own gardens, chickens, pigs and cattle. They put up fruit, garden truck, and butchered. They put away for winter smoked meats, eggs, butter, and dried fruits, and from the store house they drew their supplies in winter, and from the garden, hennery, and orchard in summer. These taverns could also draw on the neighbors and farms nearby for any surplus food they had for sale. This provided a source of revenue for the farmer. Each tavern also stored ice in the winter for summer use.

Boucher's "Century and a Half of Pittsburgh" gives us an interesting picture of the inside of one of these tavern bar rooms after the arrival of a number of these Conestogas. "A requisite of the

old-fashioned wagon or stage town tavern or way-side inn was a large room used as an office and bar room and as a sleeping place for the wagoners. In it was a large open fireplace which was abundantly supplied with wood in the early days and later with coal. Around this when the horses were cared for and the evening's diversion was over, the wagoners spread their bunks in a sort of semi-circle with their feet to the fire, for they were said to be much subjected to rheumatism and this position was taken as a preventative. These bunks were carried with them and laid on the floor, and in this position they passed the night."

Accommoda-
tions
Described

A word as to the accommodation of stage coach guests will be interesting. There was no footman to open and close the door. No office, no register, no porter to carry the baggage to the room—the proprietor did all this if it was done at all. The rooms would make two or three of the size found in hotels today. Very often there was no carpet on the floor. If there was a carpet, it was a home made rag carpet and rugs. There were no such accommodations as running water, bathtubs, and other modern conveniences and equipment. Only a few had fire places in them, and curtains on the windows were the exception and were real marks of refinement. There was no wall paper (white walls were the order), few pictures, and in the rooms for ladies or couples a wash bowl and pitcher could be found. Rooms for men usually contained two or three beds. The guests were forced to double up because of the shortage of rooms, for the buildings were not large and did not contain many rooms.

The clothes racks usually consisted of a board with nails, attached to the wall or the nails alone. Tallow candles and later oil lamps provided the illumination at night. There were no push buttons or call bells, and if a pitcher of cold water was wanted, the guest got it from the pump in the back yard before retiring. Beds were called rope beds. They were so called because of the use of ropes instead of slats. These ropes were passed back and forth across the beds as well as lengthwise; they were attached to wooden pins in the sides and ends forming a kind of checkerboard appearance. This also answered for springs and made a very comfortable though rather noisy bed. The old time feather ticks were used and also real wool blankets.

Candles,
Rope Beds

On rising in the morning, unless the guest were a gentleman, he performed his customary ablutions in a common wash basin on the back porch in the summer, or in the kitchen or bar in winter, and used a common towel and comb. The wagoners quite often made their toilet at the watering trough in the back yard.

The dining room was usually the largest room aside from the bar room, and usually on that side of the house. There was a special table for the ladies and gentlemen which was given a little more attention than the ones at which the teamsters were served. Many fascinating stories have been told of the wonderful feasts which took place at some of these taverns. The food was placed in large tureens, bowls, and great meat platters. When the tables with their oil cloth or occasionally red and white figured cotton cloths were all set and all was

Common
Table

in readiness, the dinner bell was rung with a will, and the tramp, tramp of these leather booted wagoners as they came down the carpetless hall into the carpetless dining room (for there were few that contained carpets) could be heard on those wooden floors, as soldiers drilling in a hall. Soon the great trays of meat and stacks of bread were passing up and down the line as well as jokes and experiences of the day. The food was stacked high on their plates, and in due time they all pitched in while two or three country lassies served as waitresses and replenished the coffee in the great thick cups from which it was poured into the saucers and drunk from these. The stage travellers were served in much the same manner. It was a common occurrence for both wagoners and other guests to have liquor served to them in the dining room with their meals.

Liquor,
Coffee

Women were very often found behind the bar serving liquor to the patrons in the early days with little or no reflection on the women. The practice of employing barmaids is still followed in Europe and the far east from whom we copied, but the fact that we discontinued this practice almost altogether in this country brings into sharp contrast the higher standards of conduct we set for women in this much younger nation.

Our
Taverns

Wilkinsburg had four of these taverns in the early days. They were situated very close to the places shown in the artist's sketch of the early village with the exception of the one below Wood Street on the north side of Penn Avenue which should be further west on the spot where the

freight station now stands. We do not know the names of all these respective taverns nor when they began business.

It seems almost certain that Samuel A. Rippey had the first tavern, and that he opened his place prior to 1800. It was known as the Rippey Tavern. James McNair in his book "McNair Genealogies" states that Mr. Rippey married a sister of Col. Dunning McNair and that the Rippeys conducted a tavern here, the community taking the name of Rippeyville because of his influence. The names of two other tavern proprietors were Bowl Martz and Jerry Martz.

The taverns which were open six days and nights of the week were meeting places to enjoy a social glass as well as a social chat, and oftentimes to be entertained. Thus the tavern became an institution with us as with other nations. There has gathered about this institution a fund of folklore that is very fascinating to say the least.

The growth of the village was so gradual that it is difficult to show any marked change from one stage to another, especially in these early days. However, there were three personalities which played an important part at this period. One was a physician. About 1830 the village could boast of its own doctor in the person of Dr. J. B. Carothers. He remained until 1848, when he was succeeded by Dr. John Semple. The third personality was the postmaster. One day a ripple of excitement ran over the village. The government had decided that a post office was to be established in the village. This was done about May 20, 1840, and Abraham

Dr.
Carothers,

Dr. Semple

Postmaster

Stoner became the first postmaster. The office was located in Mr. Stoner's General Merchandise store, now 732 Penn Avenue. This event became an interesting topic of discussion. All realized that it would make the village an additional center of attraction and bring in people from the surrounding country to do their trading. Prior to this they went to Pittsburgh, because they got their mail at that post office.

There were several other red letter days to which



McKELVEY HOMESTEAD, COR. WOOD & PENN AVE., WHERE
FIRST NATIONAL BANK IS NOW LOCATED

the older families referred in the early history of the village. The first was the coming of the first public school. The first public school building was erected in Wilkinsburg in 1840. It was situated on the northwest corner of Wallace Avenue and Center Street. Our village was then part of Wilkins township. Prior to this, the children attended

a school somewhere on the Frankstown Road. The first school teachers in the village were N. B. Hatch and Harvey Nelson, both of whom became lawyers later on.

Beulah Presbyterian Church had been the religious center of the village for half a century, but there had been a number of additions to the population who belonged to the Methodist faith, and these folks felt that a Church closer than Beulah was desirable. So a number of them organ-

First,
Second
Churches



FIRST CHURCH ERECTED IN THE VILLAGE.
METHODIST EPISCOPAL (NOW SOUTH AVE. M. E.)
ERECTED WALLACE AVE. NEAR CENTRE ST. 1843.

ized a congregation and in 1843 built the first Church in the village. It was known as The Wilkinsburg Methodist Episcopal Church, and was situated on Wallace Avenue. The First Baptist

*Windows—Drawing by Robert R. Young.

Church now occupies this site. Rev. A. J. Rich served as the first pastor. The first officers of the Church were James McKelvey, John Perchmont, Samuel Chadwick, John Stevenson, John Wilson, and Daniel Double.

Churches

The village was now taking on an air of importance. It could boast of its own physicians, church, its school, and two school teachers. The coming of the school and the church added much to the social life of the village, as will be seen later. The village growth was very slow, yet noticeable; and by 1850 two more churches had been added, the Reformed Presbyterian in 1845 at its present location corner Center and South Avenues, and the United Brethren Church in 1850, located then on Ross Avenue between Coal and Swissvale Avenues on the northwest side of Ross Avenue.

Wilkinsburg Academy

Our history would not be complete without some brief reference to that once beloved institution, the Wilkinsburg Academy, which added so much to the life of the village during the period of its existence—1852 to 1860. Dr. F. R. Stotler, an old citizen of Wilkinsburg, writes, "It was opened as a select school in 1852 by James Houston. Shortly afterwards Rev. John M. Hastings, pastor of Beulah Church, took charge and conducted the school. In 1855 he gave up the Academy to his brother Fulton W. Hastings. In 1856 a stock company was formed and the building thereafter was known as Wilkinsburg Academy. Many of the residents of Wilkinsburg and vicinity owned stock, and naturally sent their children to the school. The institution was co-educational, and, until the beginning of the Civil

War, prospered. It was largely attended not only by the youth of the village but also by many from the surrounding country. Many of the pupils boarded here with resident families. When the war opened, the school was discontinued, and the short but brilliant career of Wilkinsburg Academy ended. Attempts to reopen it in 1866 proved a failure. In 1875 it served as a public school building for a brief period."

It may be interesting to some to know that Wilkinsburg could boast of having had an astronomer within its borders. Mr. Bonepart Hatch was his name. Mr. James Kelly employed him as a teacher at Dumpling Hall for his private school. When the first public school opened in Wilkinsburg, Mr. Hatch took charge. Dr. Stotler says that he later drew the attention of Mrs. Schenley, who purchased him a splendid telescope and mounted it in Allegheny. "Thus," says Dr. Stotler, "Wilkinsburg in the very beginning hitched her educational wagon to a star."

Bonepart
Hatch

CHAPTER THREE.

TRANSPORTATION AND PROGRESS

Railroad—Canal—Ways of progress—Woman—Dress—Farm work — Food — Customs — Social — Religious — Marriage—Funerals—Superstitions—Artist's sketch.



PERHAPS the two greatest factors in the development of Wilkinsburg were the coming of the railroad and the introduction of the automobile as a pleasure car and a competitor in transportation. The latter is responsible for the development of our county and state roads to their present splendid condition, with all the other benefits which have resulted therefrom. The building of a railroad or the introduction of some great invention brings with it such great possibilities; creates a demand for necessities; introduces new ideas; and seems to set a pace and a goal so far ahead that it requires generations to catch up. When the goal seems about to be realized, and things become commonplace, there appears to be a slowing down process taking place. When this condition arrives, things are ripe for another big push or an epoch-making event, which always seems to come either with a revolution, another great invention, discovery, or the like. Thus nature or the Great Architect carries the world forward toward the final goal,—whatever that may be. This is just as true to any part of the nation, and our village was in some such condition when the survey for the railroad took place about 1850.

We received our mail by stage coach, our merchandise by Conestoga wagon or packhorse either from the canal terminal in Pittsburgh or direct from the east. There was nothing to be had in the way of positions in the village unless it would be in the stores. All other work was day work on the pike, on the larger farms, or in the timber. There was nothing to which to aspire in the village proper, and it was practically impossible to drive daily back and forth to Pittsburgh where the opportunity of getting into the skilled trades or professions was fairly good; so the only thing the people were seriously concerned about was sowing, planting, reaping, the schools, and religion. They were tied, as it were, to the land. But this isolation had its good points as well as its drawbacks. Perhaps the saying "Jack of all trades, and master of none" had its origin in the period prior to 1850 and was applied to certain types of mechanics. Before the days of the railroad, men were compelled to do a little of everything from clock repairing to barn building, well digging, cobbling, blacksmithing, veterinary work, and anything else that needed to be done. They did not have time or opportunity to specialize in any one thing. The women were no less handy. They could spin, weave, make their own as well as the men's clothing, and knit. They knew how to farm, and did their share of the work even in the harvest fields, besides their multitudinous domestic duties. People were very largely selfsustaining and had to be because of their inability to procure the manufactured goods due to the prohibitive cost of overland transportation. Furthermore, it will be

Men Jack of
All Trades

Women's
Activities

conceded that these village folk lived contented and peaceful lives, even with all their restrictions. A fine neighborly spirit was fostered that has almost completely disappeared in these more modern days.

About the opening of the year 1850 an announcement was made that a railroad was to be built through the village. This created a very great interest and was a constant subject of discussion. It was looked upon as the solution of many of the problems confronting the village folks. Men reasoned that the railroad would give many employment, so applicants for positions far exceeded the number of places to be filled. This became the one great subject discussed in homes, stores, and on the street. Very few of the people in the village had ever seen a railroad, or a locomotive and train. A



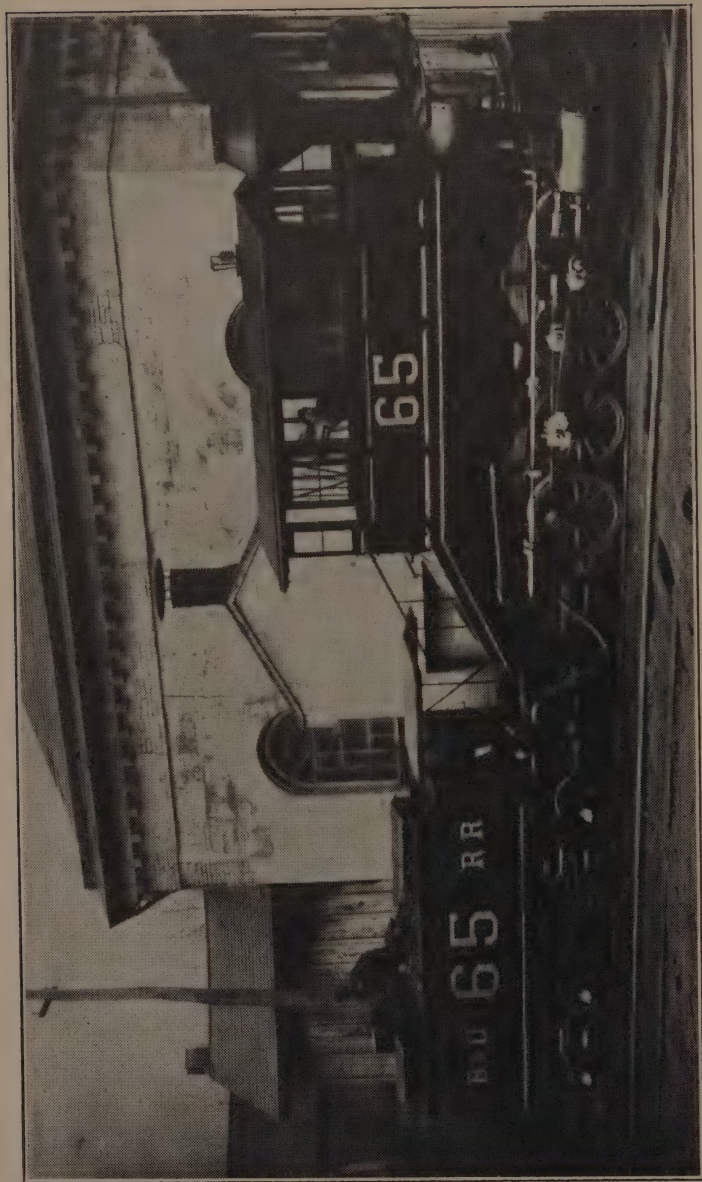
FIRST ENGINE HAULING THROUGH TRAIN TO PHILADELPHIA
1852 ON PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD—CALLED THE
F. K. HEISLEY

few had seen a picture; but some had not even seen the pictures. There were very few magazines and newspapers then that could afford to publish expensive cuts. It was in 1852 that the road was com-

pleted. On December 10, 1852, the first through passenger train blew its whistle for our village station. William Turner, Sr., says that men, women, and children came running from all directions, headed for the station that they might see this wonderful sight. ⁴"The engine of this first passenger train was eighteen feet long, eight feet high at the stack, and six feet high at the engine cab. It weighed 2600 pounds. The name of the engine was the F. K. Heisley." Names instead of numbers were used in the early days. Its stack was what is known as the balloon type, and it burned wood. The passenger coaches were painted red, were lighted with oil lamps, and were heated with wood stoves,—one in each end of the car. Wooden shutters were used on the windows. There was a bell rope running the entire length of the train to a bell in the engine used to signal the engineer. The cars were equipped with hand brakes, which were applied when the engineer blew the whistle. There was an open space between the cars, so that in passing from one to the other care had to be exercised to keep from falling off. The train was coupled together with links and pins. ⁵"The first local train had run from Pittsburgh to Brinton, just west of East Pittsburgh exactly one year previously—Dec. 10, 1851. The engineer on this train was Charles Channey, and the conductor was William Barton." The construction of the railroad had been carried on from both ends of the division. The machinery and first locomotive brought to this end of the state came in to Pittsburgh by way of the canal and were unloaded at a point which is

4—Records of W. H. Hudson, P. R. R. Road Foreman of Enginenen.

5—Records of W. H. Hudson, P. R. R. Road Foreman of Enginenen.



ONE OF THE FIRST—CAMEL BACK TYPE

now known as Eleventh Street and Liberty Avenue. While unloading, the locomotive fell overboard into the canal. In those days the fare from Wilkinsburg to Pittsburgh and return on the train was thirty-four cents. Seventy-five years later we make it for twenty cents with one hundred per cent better service and equipment. The horses and cattle could not get accustomed to this new noise making machine, and the farmer usually tied his team a respectful distance from the tracks. Many runaways resulted from the driver approaching too near to the locomotive. The coming of the railroad resulted in a greater spirit of independence because of the positions secured as track men, station agents, and in the Pittsburgh terminal. The men could travel back and forth to their work free. It was not long until the effect of these monthly wages and the added demand for farm products was noticeable in the furnishings of the homes and the dress of the family.

From the date of the completion of the canal, November 10, 1829, Pittsburgh began to expand rapidly. In 1800 the population was 1,565, and in 1810, 4,768. This increase naturally attracted labor from the country round about. It also created a demand for farm products that was very acceptable to the farmer. The acreage for grain steadily increased everywhere. Dairying and poultry, stock and fruit raising became paying businesses, and a farmer of larger acreage was thereby able to give employment to many of the village men and women, with the result that many homes showed great improvement in their furnishings and entire families

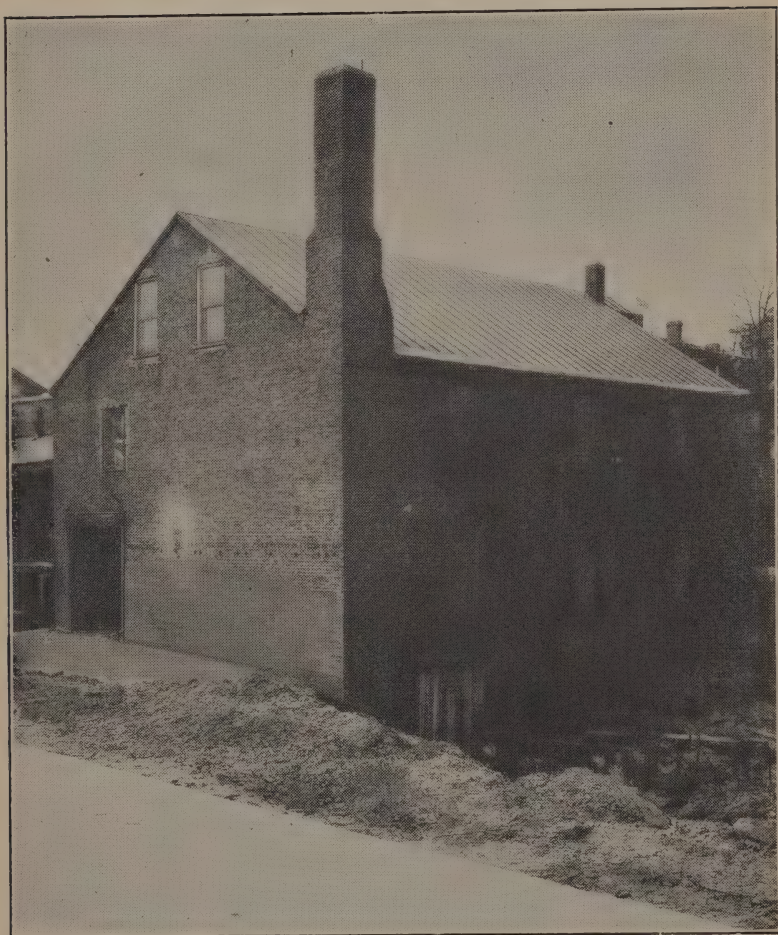
Canal

in their appearance. This was also true of those who worked in the industries.

Farm
Machinery

The great improvement in farm machinery had not yet begun. For mowing the scythe continued to be used. For cutting grain the cradle, which was shaped much like one's hand when it is half-closed. The little finger of the hand would represent the scythe blade. The other fingers would serve to gather the stalks of wheat in the cradle until the full stroke was made, when by a quick twist the contents were deposited in a straight row to the worker's left. As much as four acres could be cut in a day. It was customary for the farmers to help each other do their harvesting without pay. Many will remember the ringing of the old bell on top of the smokehouse or on a post, or the voice of the old fish horn which sounded out over the meadows to call the workers to dinner. In the early days the threshing machine was run by horse power. A great cog wheel about ten or twelve feet in diameter connected to a long shaft transmitted power to the machine. A long tongue was attached to this wheel and four or six horses pulled the wheel around. Threshing day on the farm was also a feast day. The housewife knew of it several days ahead, and a feast of good things was always on hand. These threshers moved long distances after night, using lanterns over the dark roads and streams, in order to arrive at the next farm and get their machine set up to commence work at day break the next morning.

In the very early days most of the flour, meal, and feed were ground in the local mills in or near



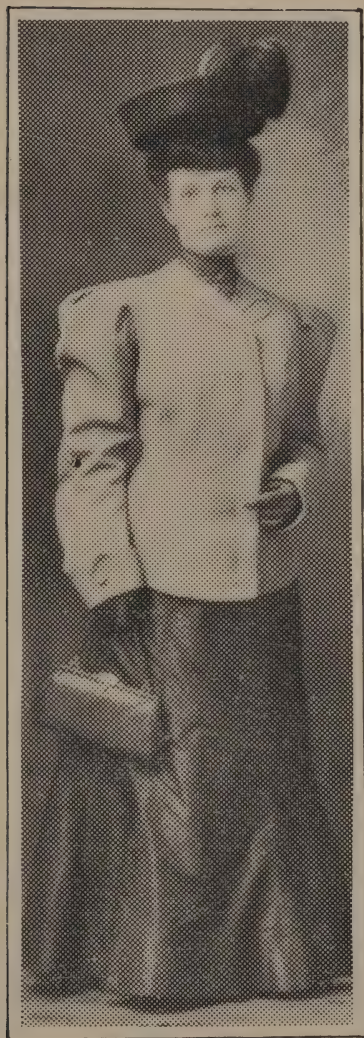
OLD GRIST MILL—OUR OLDEST BUILDING
ERECTED ABOUT 1825

the community where it was raised. All of these grist mills were run by water power, using a large wooden wheel. The mills were erected on small streams, and reservoirs were dug near the mills impounding the water, then conducting it through ditches to the wheels. Most of the machinery was made of wood, including the cog wheel and shafts.



THE FLAIL—ONE OF THE OLDEST
OF FARMING IMPLEMENTS

Some of these mills are still operating in the mountain districts of this and other states. Going to the mill was an important occasion because of what one could learn of the gossip of the whole countryside. The miller knew of the births, deaths, marriages, crops, and any and everything of importance. A cut of our old grist mill dating back to early days (exact date unknown) is shown on page 75. There



A STYLISH MAIDEN
(In 1885)

was very little machinery and very few tools between 1830 and 1850. It was only the larger land owner who could own the necessary machinery and implements, but even he had to have men to use them, which he did not always have. He was thus forced to call on his less fortunate neighbor for help, who in turn traded his services for the use of the machines or implements to harvest his own grain, or whatever else he was doing. During the nineteenth century there was a splendid working basis between the farmers that was mutually helpful. This accounts for the splendid progress and fellowship of that day.

Exchange
of Labor

Styles

Because of changed conditions of living, another brief reference to some of the styles of the early days will not be amiss. In 1833 women's dresses were in two pieces—waist and skirt. Slim waists were the order, and the slimmer the better. Looking at the pictures of those days one would wonder how these young ladies breathed at all. The leg of mutton sleeve was also the style, in which almost as much material was used as in the skirt. Steel hoops also appeared in 1833 and did not disappear until the eighties. In 1860 the more exaggerated form became the rage, as well as a subject for much satire by the comic magazines such as Punch and others. They graduated in size from the waist down until they were four feet wide at the bottom. The wearer could not get through doors without crushing them together. Several of the wearers of such garments in one room were quite sufficient to fill it. One can imagine what would happen in street cars and railroad trains

Hoop
Skirts

today should the style return. The head dress in the thirties resembled a cap or wrapping not unlike the turban of the Hindoos. In the fifties, a bonnet type of hat was worn with ribbons which tied under the chin. In the early eighties fantastic creations were worn—ugly, peculiar, and standing very high on the head, with large plumes and fruit for trimmings. Large fur muffs and neck pieces appeared in the forties. The hoops, small waists, mutton-leg sleeves, muffs, and fancy parasols remained until the eighties. In the eighties the most unsightly contraption ever adopted for the adornment of womankind was the rage. It was known as the bustle, and was made of feathers, rags, and paper. In size it ranged from six to nine inches and was worn across the hips at the waist line, and tied in front with strings. It was worn under the outer skirt, and sometimes under both. Never was the female figure so distorted. The reader's imagination must supply the picture. This style lasted about five years. In the late eighties, also, the style of hairdressing changed radically, and the ladies used what were called "rats" in the hair. These were large balls of hair worn on the front of the head, and a roll of what they called "bangs" was stretched over this to a height of about four inches. Hats were so constructed as to exhibit this creation.

Bonnets

Bustle

Rats

The style of men's clothes has varied very little for a hundred years. The long trousers appeared first in the year 1820. Prior to that the short knee breeches were worn. The long tight trousers were first worn inside of high boots, later with shoes, a

Men's
Clothes

strap passing under the sole at the instep. Later the strap disappeared, and the legs were widened. The principle change has been in width and pockets. The coats have been largely the Prince Albert style, sack, and cutaway styles. They, like the trousers have differed merely in length and the fullness of the skirt for a hundred years. Men's hats range from the derby, soft hat, and straw, to the so-called plug or high silk hat. The latter has largely disappeared except for state and social functions.

Plug
Hat

HABITS AND CUSTOMS

Since we have devoted most of our space thus far to our growth, it seems wise that we now retrace our steps and look in upon the domestic life of the early settlers, and consider their habits and customs, their religious, and political lives from about 1830 to 1880. After the harvest had been completed, the early fruit crops had to be gathered. Orchards increased in size and production from about 1825 until about 1885 when the killing frosts from year to year so discouraged the farmers that they began to neglect the orchards, and they greatly deteriorated, while more attention was given to grain and cattle. In the early fall at the time of the apple picking, sometimes before, apples were hauled by wagon to the cider press to be made into cider, which, after it had stood for a certain length of time, became vinegar. Thus the surplus apple crop was utilized when the ripened fruit

Harvesting

Fruits

Cider
Press

could not be sold or put in cold storage. This cider was very pleasant and safe to drink, if partaken of before it got to old. Some people remained too long at the bung-hole of a cider barrel with a straw, which did not result in their edification, or that of the saints, a few hours later. A very considerable amount of surplus apples were also made into apple butter. Two methods of preserving garden truck and fruit were practiced in the early days. One was by digging a hole in the ground,—preferably in a hill side—and burying about two feet or more. The other, and better, was where a cave could be made in the side of a hill, and a tight door put on, giving ready access for sorting. This latter method almost eliminated waste by decay. Preserving was not practiced to any great degree prior to 1830 because of the difficulty in obtaining sugar, as there were no railroads and the canal did not open until 1829. The maple sugar obtained from the trees was not so well adapted to preserving.

Another interesting day was that on which the winter meat was prepared. A day in the late fall, usually about Thanksgiving, was the time chosen for butchering. The majority of the village folk in the early days, and even after the village became a borough, kept pigs and chickens. One or two neighbors were invited, according to the magnitude of the task, and from daybreak until late evening the work of preparing the meat and making sausage, and rendering lard was prosecuted. The worker's pay was a considerable portion of the meat, sausage, and lard.

Butchering

Another occasion that afforded much interest

Barn
Raising

and enjoyment in the spring or fall was a barn-raising. With the more intensified farming came the necessity for larger barns. The numerous sheds and small stables no longer sufficed, and consolidating stock, grain, and hay also simplified the work. A man would be secured to cut out and complete the frame of the barn, and when all was ready, word was sent out to the surrounding country of the date of the raising. Like the threshing, it was an occasion for feasting, and the good housewife played a very important part in the success of the undertaking,—as important as that of any of the men. With block and tackle the frame would be swung into place, and secured with wooden pegs—no nails being used in the frame—and all without cost, with the exception of the pay for the framer and the cost of feeding the workmen.

A very important task before the snow flakes began to fly was securing the winter wood. Of course, coal was to be had in and around Pittsburgh from the earliest days; but when the first coal pit was opened in the vicinity of Wilkinsburg is not certain. We find a record of the digging of coal as early as 1860. Mr. Jacob Weinman, an old resident, began supplying coal to the village in 1871, but prior to 1850 almost everyone burned wood. If sold, it was by the cord. It was cheap. Every farm had fallen timber and dead timber to supply the farmer's winter wood and to spare. Sometimes it was cut in small lengths in the forest. Again it was hauled in near the house in long lengths, and afterwards chopped. The so called "wood-chopper" originated from those who made

Coal

Winter's
Wood

a business of providing fuel for sale. Abraham Lincoln, the rail splitter, was one such.

There was also the country tailor and the boot and shoe maker. We still give the latter the title of shoemaker although the great majority of those now receiving the name would not know how to make a pair of boots or shoes. The bootmaker and tailor were usually located in or near the village. There was somewhere within a few miles of all settlements a cloth weaver, and a tannery for leather. The tailor and the bootmaker produced a product that perhaps did not permit much boasting in the way of style, but for wearing qualities have never been equaled, unless it be the garments of the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness. There were also hat makers, already referred to earlier in the history.

Boots and
Shoes

Tailor

Hats

Lest the reader might conclude from the reading of the last few pages that our forefathers were kept so busy the year round tearing a living from mother earth that it was purely a case of "all work and no play" we want to set down at this point of our history some of the lighter activities, which took on a mixture of both play and work. The philosophy of "Tom Sawyer" in Mark Twain's book of that title was much in evidence in that, as in this day. It will be recalled that Tom had a long fence to whitewash, and his boy companions coaxed him to desert and come and play ball. Tom argued but also worked. He used the brush with such ease and skill that that which seemed work to the gang turned to play, and they plead with him to let them try their hand. Reluctantly Tom granted

Tom
Sawyer

this, and one by one the boys tried their skill, until the whole fence was whitewashed. Many of the tasks of the early days were accomplished in some such manner.

Corn
Husking

A corn husking bee never ceased to be an interesting and entertaining event as late as the eighties. It is usually recalled in connection with the old fashioned barn dance. Both men and women were more or less proud of their ability to husk more corn than any other person. A nice bright day in the fall was selected, and in the late afternoon all went to the field, threw down the shocks and went at it. The prize was the privilege of selecting one's own partner at the barn dance and the feast that followed. The barn floor was cleared. Lanterns were hung in several places. A man called the figures (directing the movements of the dancers) while the fiddler (sometimes a horn was added) furnished the music. They danced the round dance, and the old, delightful Virginia Reel. Those who have participated in these in the early days will call up some charming scenes. There were corn hoeing contests also.

Barn
Dance

Reel

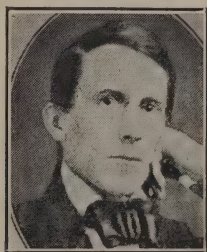
Spelling Bee

The first record of a group entertainment in our immediate vicinity is found in the records of Beulah in 1809, but we find the spelling bee, singing school, literary and debating societies were held over in the vicinity of Greensburg, Adamsburg, and Irwin in Westmoreland County as early as 1825. They were also conducted here in the old school-house about 1842, and in the East Liberty District prior to that. When this kind of entertainment appeared it indicated an easing up of the struggle

Literary
Society

Debating
Societies

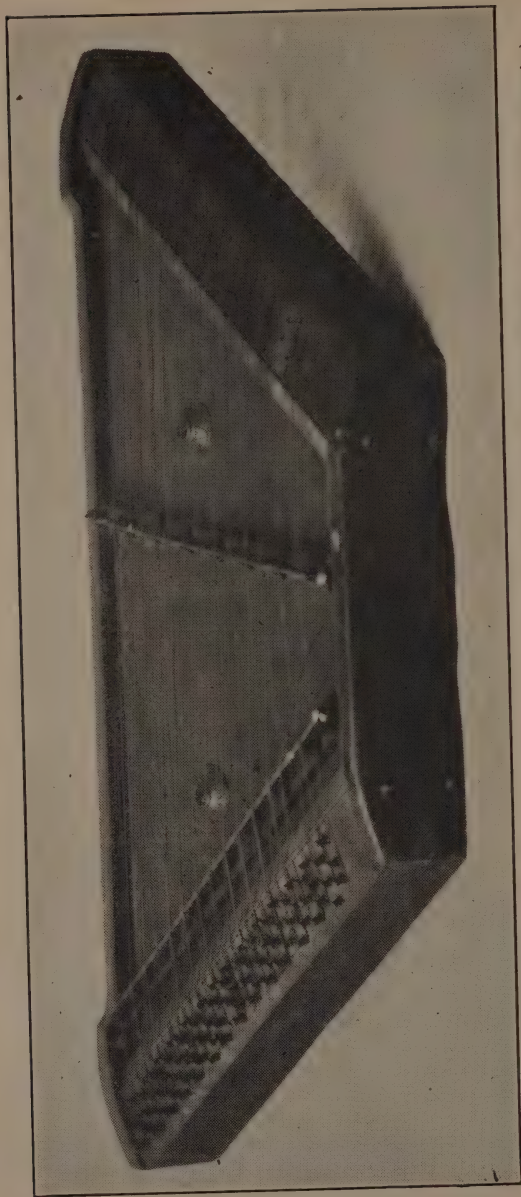
for existence, and a yearning for some of the more pleasant and care free hours when the daily grind would be forgotten. The old schoolhouse became the centre of most of the social activities of the early days, as it is now in the rural districts. The youth and many of the older ones gathered from far and near to witness the spelling contests. These were real contests. Sides were chosen, and an individual selected to give the words from the spelling book, and the contest began. Anyone who missed a word took his seat, on either side, until the last person remained, who continued until all the words were given out. Occasionally one would have a perfect record until the end.



STEPHEN FOSTER—1826-1864

Perhaps there was no source of entertainment in the early days that quite equalled the singing society for real pleasure both to participant and listener. These meetings were always held during the winter months. The last the author attended was in a building situated in the woods three miles from the village. I walked out and back and enjoyed the walk, except for the fright I received

Singing
Society



DULCIMER—(ZITHER) MADE IN WILKINSBURG 1867 BY ROBERT HUMPHRIES—(Used for dance music.)

from a supposed ghost. (I was alone.) A small ball of fire kept bobbing around through the woods, making no noise, but steadily coming toward me. I did not run—I could not. The snow was over shoe-top deep, and no sound was made in walking. When the ball of fire got near me—on the opposite side of the road, it said, “Good evening!” It was a man smoking a cigar. There were about seventy-five present at the school. It was all group singing. How that little building rang with melody that night. Principally folk songs were sung, without the organ. We sang for the love of singing, and we were thrilled with the volume and sentiment. People went home in groups in various directions, often singing as they went.

The first musical instruments appearing in the inland towns were the violin, fife, mouth organ, flute, and jews-harp. It is doubtful if any of the present generation ever saw a jews-harp—sometimes pronounced a “juice harp.” It was so called because it was placed between the teeth and a protruding wire was struck by the finger. The saliva sometimes travelled with the music. The instrument was about four inches long, and one inch deep, and was shaped like the letter U, with a tongue extending out through the opening. The contracting and protruding of the lips changed the tones of the music. The house organ, with rare exceptions, did not appear until after the Civil War, and the piano not until the late seventies. It was only the well-to-do who could afford an organ, and in the early eighties it was a mark of distinction to possess a piano. It is doubtful whether

Musical
Instruments

three pianos could be found in Wilkinsburg in the early eighties, when the town contained as many as two thousand inhabitants. The accordin was found in a great many homes in the village and on the farm. It was played altogeth by ear, but one who was skillful, with a good ear for music, could furnish entertainment for the entire evening. This instrument almost completely disappeared about 1890.

Literary
Societies

The Literary Society, which was more often a debating society, met in the school house also, and was attended by the same people who attended the singing schools. The debates required contestants who were more or less gifted in speech, and able to speak well in public. Talent of this kind was difficult to secure. The subjects debated were very old ones, but they continued to be debated until the late eighties. The subjects for debate would be something like the following—"Resolved that fire is more destructive than water." "What would happen if an irresistable force struck an immoveable object?" "Resolved, that the cow is more valuable than the horse." And many others of like character.

"Remember
the
Sabbath"

There were three churches in the village in 1850—the Methodist Episcopal, Reformed Presbyterian, and United Brethren. These, with the school, were centers of attraction for both young and old in the social life of the village. Everyone went to church on Sabbath. The day was held in very high regard. No work was done except attending to the home duties, the stock, and the like. If it was necessary to make a purchase of any kind on Sabbath, the seller was

not supposed to accept the money until Monday.

The church services became quite exciting sometimes at one or two of the churches, and one's religious fervor might find expression in shouting without any danger of being arrested, or considered a fit subject for the asylum, or as being possessed of a devil. Strange as it may seem in this practical day, there really were some very respectable people who believed in this kind of demonstration. From the very early days until now this has been a church going community. Our high type of community life without doubt is traceable to this habit. Furthermore, Wilkinsburg has always demanded and received a very high type of religious leadership; and the fruit of such leadership has been manifest in the high type of Christian neighborliness characteristic of those early days. Were there any sick? If so, their neighbors were not found wanting in many little acts of sympathy, the tempting dishes of food, the proffers of service in baking, washing, or doing the housework, and keeping watch through the long hours of the night. The women were not alone in this. The men offered their services in their various capacities as well. If death came, the men kept wake, as was the custom. If a widow and orphans were left, they never went hungry or without clothing for everyone in the village regarded it as his duty to see that part of his surplus went to the stricken ones. The sorrow of one was the sorrow of all,—as were also their joys. It was these little acts of helpfulness and expressions of sympathy that touched the well-springs of all that was good and noble in the human

Religious
Leaders

Religious
Practice

heart, and enabled Riley and others in verse, and Foster in song to call forth an admiration akin to worship as they paint us word pictures contrasting so strikingly this age of materialism with that period of humanity.

Marriage

Except in the case of those who were considered society folk, most of the village marriages were in the largest sense community affairs. The most of the villagers were expected to witness the ceremony. The invitations usually were personal. In the seventies, there was a custom adopted in the small towns of the band calling at the home of the newly wed couple and serenading them. The newly weds were expected to contribute \$5. or \$10. to the band treasury. The boys of the community also thought it quite proper that they should serenade them, but in a somewhat different manner. Fish horns, horse fiddles, old tin boilers, and buckets, tin cans of stones, and every noise making device that could be secured did duty, and woe unto that couple if they did not treat. It usually cost as much as the real band. Old shoes and rice were thrown after the bride and groom for good luck. An old book of marriages kept by Rev. J. M. Hastings shows that he married 102 couples at Beulah Church from 1846 to 1873. He received not less than \$2.50 and not more than \$20.00 for his services. Some of the most prominent people here, in the city and surrounding country were married at Beulah.

Bethrothal

The betrothal in marriage was approached from a different angle than now, especially among the middle classes. The qualifications of the bride-to-

be were not so much her ability as a dancer or piano-player, or the fine clothes she wore; but rather was she strong, could she cook and keep house, and did she know how to make a home. In rural life the husband had the strenuous duty of making a living, and the wife's duties were not in the household alone, but also the care of much of the live stock. The milking and a good deal of the garden work fell to her lot in addition to the raising of a family. One must not conclude from the foregoing that these marriages were any the less happy because of these considerations. If anything, they were more so for these qualifications went far toward the establishing of happy, contented homes. It must be added too, that there was much more in common between husband and wife then than now, for they knew each other's work in detail, and they could not hide their anxieties, hopes and joys from one another. Nor was powerful affection lacking, though of an undemonstrative character in most cases. The upper classes, however, did pay a great deal of attention to the family tree, the dowry, and the social standing, and what work there was to do, including the care of the children, was largely delegated to servants.

Qualifica-
tions

A very brief reference to funerals will contrast customs of those days with that of today. When any member of the family died, it was the custom for the majority of the friends to call and express their sympathy to one or both parents, as the occasion called for. On the day of the funeral, the whole family were gathered about the casket, in the same room, and under the gaze of all present

Funerals

when they took their last leave. Then when the funeral started from the house, the bell of the church would be tolled, that is, one stroke of the clapper every fifteen seconds until the cemetery was reached. The funerals of the village were public on almost all occasions. The hearse never moved faster than a walk on its way to the cemetery, unless it was several miles away. The services at the grave were also rather lengthy. Sometimes it was very difficult to harmonize the inscriptions put on the tombstones with the life of the dead person. So much so, that sometimes these inscriptions became butts for the joker. Happily those days are gone, we hope never to return. Everything is now done to lessen the grief of the sorrowing ones. The tolling of the bell, the long service at the grave, the inscription on the tombstone, the wearing of the "widow's crepe," the crepe on the hat, and largely on the arm, the "wake"—which was largely a feast—where men kept watch (mostly slept) over the dead for fear of rats and the like, and the great quantities of food, wine and whiskey that in certain cases were consumed and ministered not to the edification either of the watchmen or the corpse;—all this has either totally or almost disappeared.

Wake's

Superstition

Superstitions played a very important part in the lives of the people from 1800 to 1890, when a very noticeable change took place, due for the most part to education. Space does not permit reference to any great number of them, for they were legion, neither can we ignore them.

Revolving a chair on one leg was a sign of a fight.

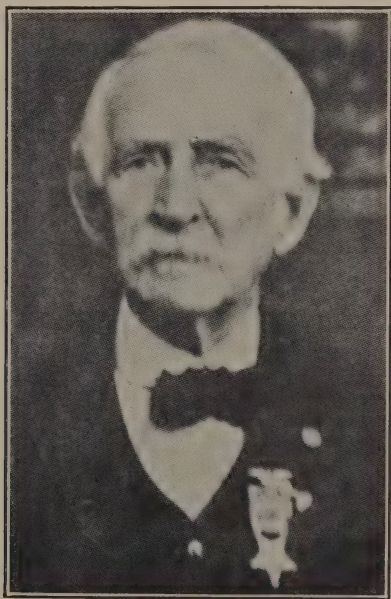
Raising an umbrella inside the house was bad luck. Breaking a mirror meant bad luck for seven years. Spilling salt was bad luck. Throwing a pinch over your left shoulder or burning it changed the bad to good luck. Seeing the moon over your left shoulder meant that the first unmarried person of the opposite sex whom you saw thereafter would be your mate through life. When starting on a journey, if you forgot something and returned for it, you must sit down for a couple of minutes, lest the trip be disastrous. Walking under ladders or over cellar doors meant bad luck. To dream of muddy water was a sign of death. Likewise the doleful howl of a dog after nine P. M. outside your door. The laying of a double-yolked egg by a chicken meant bad luck. If the egg was thrown over the house backward, the consequences were changed. A bird flying into your house meant death. Thirteen people at a gathering was certain death to one of them, —one must either get rid of one or add another. Rain on one's wedding day meant tears all through life. There was a healthy fear of churches and cemeteries after night as ghosts were supposed to have a fondness for such places. It was a common belief that many of the buildings were haunted. Hair-raising stories were told of what individuals had both seen and heard. The author could write pages of these stories, but space does not permit. Suffice it to say that the story that his satanic majesty was heard dragging his chains, the smell of brimstone, and the seeing of the dead dressed in white robes on one occasion emptied a small village (not Wilkinsburg) into the country one night to see

the ghost. These divisions under the title of superstitions could be multiplied a hundred times, but sufficient has been said to show the kind of superstitions that held sway over the people of this end of the state, as well as in other places, prior to 1890, and in some parts of the nation they still exist, but in much lesser degree.

Artist's
Sketch of
Wilkinsburg

A word of explanation about the artist's sketch of Wilkinsburg shown herein will no doubt be helpful to our older citizens. The sketch is not drawn to scale, the buildings may be a little out of place, and the architecture may have been a little different than shown in the picture—no memory picture of anything can do justice. There is no picture of the village at that early date extant, neither is there anyone living could check Mr. Turner's recollections. The Wilkinsburg Academy was added because of its prominence. This sketch of Wilkinsburg in 1844 is made from a pencil drawing made by the author as directed by the late William Turner, Sr., who was born here in 1835. In 1844 the town contained four taverns, one grist mill, a post office, one church, one school, one toll gate, a stone quarry, blacksmith shop, and about four stores. Note the frog pond at the corner of Ross and Wood Streets where the Shields Building now stands. A race track was located where the Old Couple and Old Ladies' Homes are now situated on Coal, Rebecca, and Swissvale Avenues. This race track was approached from Swissvale Avenue. From Ross Avenue eastward were vacant fields. From Dumpling Hall at the corner of Kelly and Hay Streets (then a lane) the timber extended to

Fern Hollow. North of Wallace Avenue up over the hill was timberland, except for a field or two. Mr. Turner stated after seeing the picture that Wilkinsburg resembled this picture when he was a small boy, with the exception of the Academy, which was not built until 1852.



WILLIAM TURNER, SR.

Born January 30, 1836.

TEACHER—SOLDIER—MERCHANT

CHAPTER FOUR.

EFFECT OF THE CIVIL WAR.

Canal—Railroad—Telegraph—Names of Volunteers—Panic of 1873—Furniture—Old Singer Mansion—Political boss—Elections—Wilkinsburg annexed—James Kelly restores village name—Horse street cars—Sewing machine—Sheriff sale of James Kelly properties—Growth—Vision—Fort-nightly Club—Holidays—Sports.



Q UITE more we return to gather up the threads of the story of our growth after our somewhat extended digression into the social and economic life of the early settlers. The coming of the canal and railroad brought Wilkinsburg closer to the city and also to the outside world. The telegraph had begun to knit the country together in a neighborly way. News that once took days and weeks to arrive now took minutes. The rumors of war over the slave question began to leak through and disturb the village folks. This became the subject of discussion in the homes and stores. Wilkinsburg was but a country village. What could we contribute? Who would go, if anyone? "All talk," said one. "It would only amount to a little sham battle and be over," said another. But war came, and all were wrong. Out of this small village containing less than 200, eighteen men answered the call, shouldered their muskets, and went to the front. Their names were as follows:⁶

James Woodwill
John McFarland

George Cleeland
William Turner

War

⁶—List by William Turner, Sr.

David Horner
James McWilliams
James Quinter
Aaron Culvert
B. F. Shaffer
John Turner
H. O. Turner

Samuel Creelman
William Anderson
John Stevenson
Jacob Snyder
Fred Shilling
Robert Elder
Robert Johnson

Civil War
Volunteers



DAVID GILCHRIST—CIVIL WAR—1861-1865

All of these returned except James McWilliams, who died in the war. We pass over those long years of struggle of both those in the field and those at home, for war meant great sacrifice and hardship to all. We can, however, appreciate what the

home-coming meant, since this generation has passed through the experiences of the world war. The reconstruction period set in shortly after the close, and industry and the country at large felt the pinch keenly. These conditions continued for several years, probably reaching their worst in 1873, the year of the great panic and cheap money.

Shortly after the Civil War there began to appear signs of the people turning toward a more cultured life. Prior to the war, for example, all the furniture was hand-made; the cabinet maker designing and constructing it as ordered. The furniture did not represent periods so much as the individual designer. Two pieces of furniture were outstanding in that day—one was the willow rocking chair, and the other the rope or cord bed. The latter was powerfully built, having round side rails six inches thick with pins on the top over which rope was passed back and forth in place of slats. These served in some measure as springs. Factory made furniture first appeared in 1825, but it did not become popular, no doubt due to the lack of transportation facilities; but in 1868 it came into its own and the cabinet maker felt the effect of its introduction. Now, (1927) fancy prices are paid for the old, hand-made furniture as a novelty.

About the time of the beginning of the Civil War, or 1860, John F. Singer and Alexander Nimick came to Wilkinsburg and purchased thirty acres of land from James Kelly—adjoining plots. The boundary lines were approximately these,—beginning on the upper side of North Avenue, extending eastward to Centre Avenue, then northward to or

Dawn of
Culture

Rope Bed

Factory
Furniture

Singer
Mansion

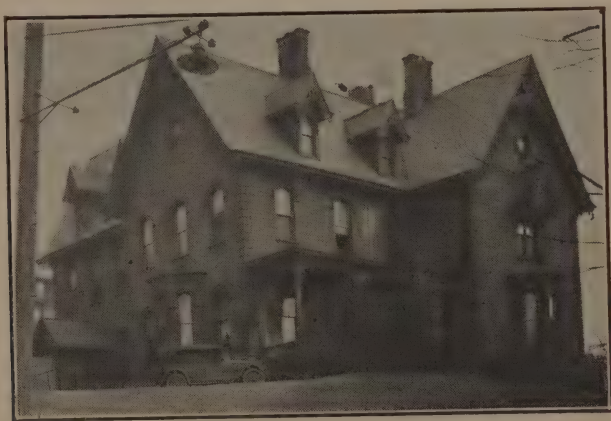
near Frankstown Avenue. These two men were the owners of the firm of Singer-Nimick and Co., iron manufacturers in the city. They proposed to erect mansions which would be worthy of men of their wealth, and to this end spared no expense. Mr. Singer completed his first. It is not known what year he broke ground, but probably after the close of the Civil War. Thomas Russell stated it



THOS. RUSSELL—1839-1936

was not completed until 1869, at which time he worked for Singer for a short while. Space only permits a brief reference to this mansion, yet it can

not be omitted, because it was then, and perhaps to the close of 1900 or later, the most pretentious and elegantly appointed as well as exquisitely finished individual dwelling within the borough limits as now constituted. The landscaping was of the most artistic conception. The lake was 125 feet wide, 8 feet deep, and extended from John Street almost to Nimick Street along Wood Street. There were vineyards, and orchards planted on the side of the hill, and all kinds of flowers and shrubbery sur-



OLD SINGER MANSION ERECTED BY JNO. F. SINGER ABOUT 1865

rounded the mansion. The house is built of stone (it is still standing) and is three stories high. The two porches, one facing south, the other west, both open on a driveway encircling the house. The first floor has a twelve foot ceiling, and the wood work is American Walnut with a circular stairway to the third floor of inlaid walnut block, all handwork.

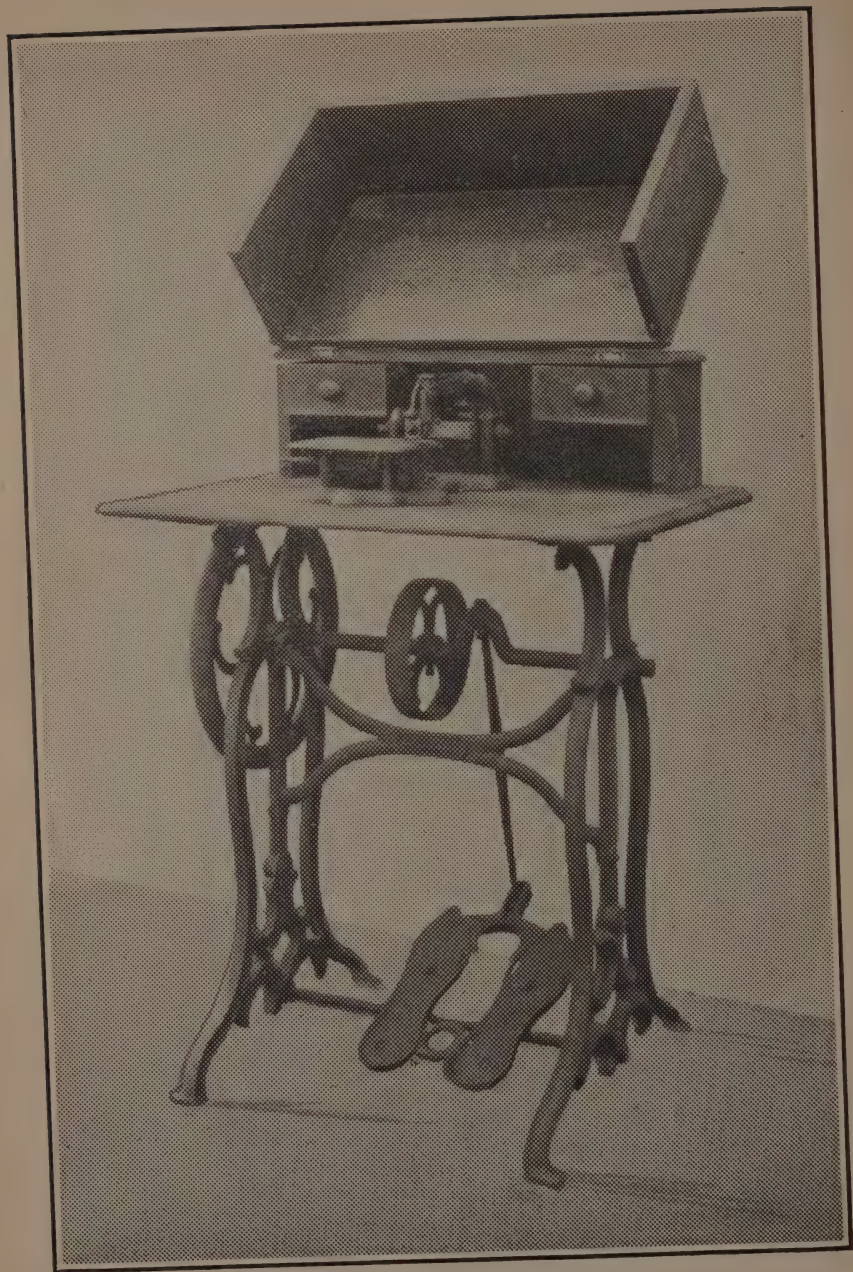
The treads are of marble, and the risers of wood. Massive chandeliers and three tone marble mantles adorn each room. The kitchen floor is of marble slabs, with inset designs. The second floor was finished in the same elegant fashion. Tradition says that workmen from England were imported to build the circular stairway, the marble mantles, and lay the kitchen floor. Tradition also says that the marble for the mantles came from a different country for each room. Mr. Singer died in the early eighties, and Mrs. Singer left for New York soon after with her children, and seldom returned. A caretaker let it be known that the place was haunted in order to keep boys and others away. A story was also circulated that Mr. Singer committed suicide in this house. This is untrue. He died a natural death, which was perhaps hastened by a reckless disregard of the laws of health. I can find no trace whatever of the Singer heirs in this county. The place is now owned (I am informed) by a member of the McCrady family. Its present occupant is Mrs. Anna Dixon, and it is known as the Dixon Manor, and occupied exclusively by Westinghouse students.

Singer's
Death

It will be interesting as a matter of record to insert a word here as to the coming of the horse-street car to Pittsburgh. The first horse-drawn cars appeared in Pittsburgh August 5, 1859. It operated between Fifth Avenue and Bairdstown, which we now know as Butler Street and Penn Avenue. The horse-car ceased operation in Pittsburgh in 1925. The driver stood out in front with no protection from the cold or storm. Cars were lighted with

Horse
Street Cars

Last
Horse Cars



THE FIRST SEWING MACHINES ABOUT 1870

lamps and heated with coal stoves. Two horses or mules were used to pull the car.

Another useful invention that appeared shortly after the Civil War was the sewing machine. It first appeared in 1871. These machines could do the work of ten people. More and better made clothes were soon in evidence. It was now a little more than twenty-five years since the railroad had come and as a result new ideas and customs were introduced. The telegraph had put the village in touch with the outside world. A great war had been fought and won. A great panic had come and gone leaving in its wake burdens and hardships of debt, reconstruction and others too numerous to mention. On none of the village folks did it fall so heavily as on James Kelly, the most outstanding man of the community, and one who would naturally be expected to weather such a storm better than most others. He had borrowed from the Pittsburgh Banks, which demanded that he take up his paper. This he could not do, and as a result they closed in upon him, bringing on his financial ruin. It required a bill almost one yard long and twelve inches wide, fine print, to describe the tracts of land and lots sold at Sheriff's sale that once belonged to James Kelly. The sale took place at the court house on Monday, December 1, 1879, at 10 o'clock A. M. It was probably the largest Sheriff's sale of individual tracts and lots in the history of Allegheny County. The banks bought most of this land, and laid it out in lots with the exception of what was already being farmed. These lots were disposed of in short order. They

Sewing
Machine

Failure
James
Kelly

Town
Plotted

were resold several times, doubling and tripling in price in no time. A real estate boom sprang into being in a fortnight. Reports went abroad from those living here telling of the boom, and new faces began to appear in the village, and new homes began to go up. The village began to grow very rapidly, although the usual pessimism was also noticeable. "This was a town without industry." "Where would the people all find work?" Such were the expressions heard from a few.

No
Political
Jobs

In the early days, the political boss was such a power that he had to be reckoned with at all times. He did not control votes with political jobs, as now, for they were few, but he used other means such as employers of labor, money lenders, railroad passes, the tariff, and many others. Judge William Wilkins was the head of one of the large banks and probably this accounted for his potential prestige. Economists hold that he who owns the land owns those who live on it—hence the large land owner was, or could be, a political power. It was at the state and county conventions that the boss ruled with the authority of an autocrat, even more so than today. There was no such thing as a primary open to any who wished to run for the various offices. On the contrary, candidates were chosen in the party conventions, and to the electorate it was a case of voting for the convention choice or none. The people then elected the members of the state legislature as well as the representatives in Congress. The United States Senators were chosen by the members of the state legislature. To get the endorsement of these bosses for anything like a bond issue

No
Primary

Senators
Chosen by
Senate

or any kind of a measure on which the people would vote nearly always assured success. In the very early days, the voting place was somewhere on Frankstown Road near Hebron Church.

In 1871 these bosses decided that Wilkinsburg should be annexed to Pittsburgh, and so it was done; but James Kelly thought otherwise. The bosses, however, won, and for a short time we were recognized as the extreme eastern ward of Pittsburgh. Mr. Kelly took the case into court and was beaten. He carried the case to the Supreme Court at his own expense and showed that many of those whose names appeared on the petition for annexation lived out as far as Greensburg, and presented other evidence of trickery, and the Supreme Court ruled in his favor. To Mr. Kelly, then, we are indebted for the privilege of running our own affairs, fifty years later.

Wilkinsburg
Annexed

Wilkinsburg
Restored by
Jas. Kelly

In this same period, 1870, the first move was made against the liquor business, or open saloon. We had four taverns in our village at that time. Again it was Mr. Kelly who took the lead in circulating the petition for the purpose of making this town dry territory. His efforts succeeded, and the taverns ceased selling liquor that year by a special act of the legislature.

Liquor
Banned
1870

Our industries at this time, 1871, consisted of a grist mill, stone quarry, coal mine, and a saw mill, the latter being located on Penn Avenue almost opposite the Columbia Hospital. No other industry was added until 1880 when Brace Brothers laundry located here on its present site. They employed sixty people. Wages in 1871 were very low. The

Industries

Wages
1871

Township
Rule

Darkness.
Mud and
Pigs

Town's
Growing
Pains

late Jacob Weinman stated he hired men to work on the road (Turn Pike) for \$1.00 a day, and in the coal mines at \$2.00 a day for ten hours work. It must be remembered however that living was cheap.

The village was part of Wilkins township, the government of which, was only concerned with roads and schools. There were no sidewalks, except cinders and boards; no sewers; no lights except an oil lamp here and there, the town being in darkness. It was permissible to keep pigs, chickens, etc., anywhere in the village. The village was a law unto itself. Yet there was a kind of leaven working with the more progressive people for a borough. There were others, however, that were afraid of higher taxes if the village became a borough, and, they argued, why not let good enough alone? Thus progress has always battled her way against those blind, well-meaning souls, who live only for the present. But the leaven kept working. In every town and city there are always found men and women who are in the lead. They think far ahead of any of their neighbors, and see what is coming, which way the community is heading, and make their plans accordingly. Sometimes they buy choice land and buildings, and when the boom comes along a little later benefit immensely,—sometimes amassing large fortunes in this way. There are others, likewise gifted, who use their gifts in behalf of the public weal. They see clearly that if certain conditions continue, grow worse, or become aggravated that the result will be disorder,—riot, famine, strikes, epidemics, and the like; and instead of looking out for themselves only, they think

and act for the group or the community. Wilkinsburg has always been fortunate in having a goodly number of such public spirited men. In the early eighties such men as R. A. and James Balph, A. W. Duff, James Wilson, James Horner, Bishop C. W. Smith, S. H. McKee, and others were of this type. These men saw clearly that if the village continued to increase there would soon be a chaotic condition which would result in epidemics, disorder, and other things which would not be for the peace, happiness, and well-being of the community; so they began to agitate and educate the people to the end that Wilkinsburg should become a borough.

In the year 1882, a fine professional spirit was manifested among the doctors as is seen in the organization of what they called the Fortnightly Club. Although our population had not yet reached 2,500, we were not troubled with a shortage of physicians, for we count ten at that time. The physicians organized this scientific society for the purpose of discussing scientific questions. ⁸The first members of the society were:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. R. B. Morrow | Dr. E. S. Riggs |
| Dr. M. O. Jones | Dr. J. E. Rea |
| Dr. A. Fleming | Dr. J. A. Lippencott |
| Dr. T. J. Gallagher | Prof. F. C. Phillips |
| Dr. John Semple | Prof. S. P. Langley |

Dr. C. B. King.

A few of the subjects discussed were as follows: Hernia, Vivisection, Tuberculosis, Climate, Malaria, Selective Absorption, Impurities in the Allegheny River Water, etc. The penalty for absence without notice was dismissal, and the membership was

Plenty
M. D.'s

limited to twelve. They disbanded in two years.

Holidays

Most people in studying the history of a country or any part of it are interested in knowing what were the outstanding holidays. The greatest holidays in the early days were Christmas, Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Circus Day. They were all observed in a different spirit from that in the year in which we write. We have never seen nor expect to see a child of six or a grown up of three or even four score years whose face did not light up and pulse appear to quicken at the mention of the word Christmas. What lovely pictures

Christmas

loom up before our mind's eye! How vivid they become, and they pull at the heart strings, and make us feel that we would like to turn back the hands of time and be "A child again, just for tonight." With what ease we step backward across the years and take our places in the old church and listen while John or Mary in clear tones reads Clement Moore's famous Christmas poem—" 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, etc." How beautiful the big tree looks decorated with its strings of popcorn, and other ornaments, and lighted with wax candles, and all the presents hung on the tree. The treat of big red and white balls of popcorn, an orange, an apple, and a colored bag of candy; those rows of stockings on the mantle, those skates, caps, scarfs, mittens, boots, guns, sleds, and a few small toys,—limited, but how precious. Those looks of surprise on parents' faces as they see what Santa brought. They were happy because we were. The great turkey dinner, the big snow man we rolled, the

skating pond, the trees in the woods with the clinging snow on the limbs, turning them into all kinds of fantastic shapes, the sledding parties with many bells, the Christmas carols, and all the rest. What joyous happy days! "How dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood." How we wanted to stop our ears and would not listen to those well-meaning souls who told us that there was no Santa Claus. The picture of Santa and his reindeer still holds a fascination for us, notwithstanding, our locks have been whitened by the frosts of many winters! These experiences were the same in thousands of small towns.

Slays and
Sleds

Fourth of July in the old days was a great day for young America. It was a day when he felt that civilization was a thing of the past. He felt at liberty to shoot guns in the public square, fire off cannon, and high explosive crackers, shoot up the town in general, burn red fire, and bring into play every noise-making device known to human ingenuity. It was a day of parades, usually headed by the old soldiers. There were sham battles by the old soldiers; there were the calvarymen who rode their prancing steeds, dressed in all their regalia with rattling swords by their sides, there were great floats, both ugly and beautiful, which exhibited the old log cabin, farm machinery, and everything that merchants had to sell. The streets were lined with booths by the churches and foods, sweetmeats, popcorn, peanuts, and lemonade were dispensed. Here young America gorged himself that he might find strength to make more noise. He lived the day to the full, and when evening time

July 4th

came found a place for himself where he might watch the fireworks. When the balloons began to go up; the skyrockets to shoot up into the clouds; the bombs with their clusters of all colors of stars to light up the heavens; the set pieces in all kinds of fantastic shapes; the red and blue fire: all these things created for him a fairyland, and when the good night piece had been set off, he wished in his heart that it might all begin over again on the morrow at daybreak. But times have changed.

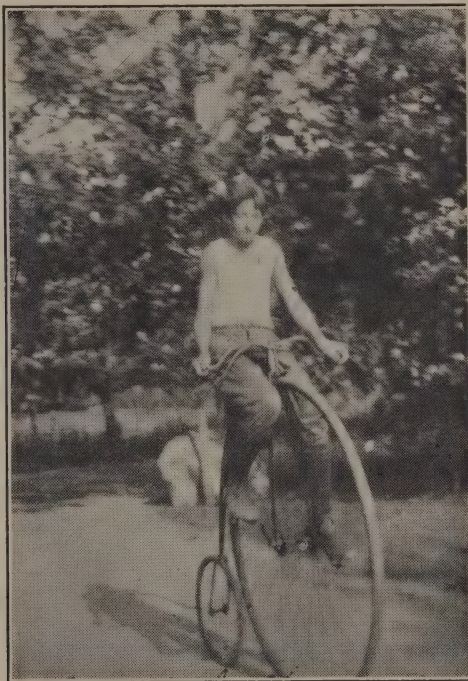
Memorial
Day

In the eighties Memorial Day was observed in a more serious frame of mind than now. We saw a very great many more of the "boys in blue," and heard much more of their sacrifices to save the union than we do in these later days. It likewise had a more sobering effect on the people, and picnics and baseball games did not seem in keeping with the day.

Circus
Day

Circus Day sometimes occurred two or three times a year. This was a great day for both young and old. It was different in that the youth could see things the greater number of which he could see nowhere else. In the early days these circuses travelled mostly by wagon, overland and after night. The distance between their places of exhibition usually did not exceed twelve miles. As a rule they arrived about the break of day, and they were usually met by the youth of the town whose business was to carry water for the elephant and camels, and do other chores. For this work they were usually given tickets of admission. Sometimes they were disappointed, and at such times stole under the curtain. If caught, they were handled

rather roughly. Their revenge in such a case was usually to throw a few choice rocks from a safe distance. The farmers usually came to town in large



ONE OF THE FIRST BICYCLES.
THE AUTHOR OWNED ONE LIKE THIS.

numbers, and it was, therefore, a holiday for them as well. Tight rope walking, colored balloons, pink lemonade, and the parade were the features of the day.

There was little skating done owing to the absence of open water other than the frog pond at

Ice
Skating

Sled
Riding

the corner of Ross and Wood Streets, which was too small. There was, however, sled riding on the hills. There were no ready made sleds. Each boy, or his father, made his own. There was the big bobsled, which was really two sleds with one in front as a guide or steering runner. A board coupled them together, and from six to ten could ride on it. The speed of these bobsleds has often been estimated as a mile a minute on a good, worn, track. At Irwin, Pa., in the eighties when the track was on the old road bed where the highway crossed the railroad at the station, a boy coming down the hill at such a speed barely missed the front trucks of a fast moving passenger coach and passed through between the front and rear trucks unharmed to the other side. The two-horse sled with the large bells, deeper in tone than sleigh bells, was used for sledding parties to the schools, and later it was considered quite a treat to be one of a large party for a ride to the country tavern for a big supper and dance. Then the sleigh, a one horse conveyance with a fancy body, sometimes called a cutter, with the front bent back 45 degrees in the shape of a goose neck was considered very exclusive. These became common in the seventies and eighties. They were often painted several colors, and with a fast horse and plenty of bells of the high pitched variety, one's blood was made to tingle as the sled sped over the hard-crusting snow on a beautiful moonlight night. The passing of these old forms of sport is a keen regret to the old timer.

Sleighs

Woodcraft

The boys were well versed in woodcraft. They knew the trees, gathered their own nuts in the fall,

and in the summer knew the wild fruits and got their share. They early learned to handle a gun, and the boys in the teens were usually good marksmen. When a youngster appeared with his home-made kites and marbles, the older folk knew that spring time was near, and that summer would soon follow.

THE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

This splendid institution, one of the greatest in the country, is doing a great work. It was founded in 1884, and, as a matter of fact, is situated just over the borough line in Edgewood. The ground was donated by James Kelly and was originally a part of the Wilkinsburg plot. The citizens of Wilkinsburg have always shown a great interest in the school and have taken pride in showing it to their



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ERECTED 1884—BURNED 1899—REBUILT 1901

visiting friends, and in attending its special public exercises. It is a private institution and controlled by a private board of directors but receives state support. There are three hundred scholars in attendance and the faculty consists of 40 special trained teachers.

The school consists of a group of twelve buildings located on spacious grounds. Its estimated value is \$1,500,000.00.

The superintendent is Prof. A. C. Manning.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRUGGLE TO BECOME A BOROUGH

Milestones — Progressives — Conservatives — The struggle — Progressives successful—First election—First session of Council — Public utilities — First electric lights — First paved street — Sewers — Board of health — Young Men's Christian Association — Panic — Coxey's Army — Electric street cars — Hundredth anniversary — Carnegie Library — Playgrounds — Scrip — Expansion — Ardmore — Silver Anniversary of Borough—Railroad crossing eliminated—Holy City.

— 1885 —



OW silently the milestones of our pilgrimage had slipped by. There have been four generations or more born and reared in Wilkinsburg. Each had largely followed in the footsteps of its fathers, with an added advantage here and there, but the feeling of the past had largely dominated village life and it was thought that what was good enough for our fathers was good enough for us and for our families.

There were a few of the old folks who began to whisper about that it would not be long until Wilkinsburg would be one hundred years old. The population had reached 2500 at the beginning of 1885, and with that growth there also developed a strong sentiment that we should become a borough. There was also a lesser sentiment that we should not.

The needs of the community such as gas, water, electric lights and sewers, and some way to regulate and exercise some authority over these necessi-

ties were topics of discussion among various groups. Those who advocated becoming a borough felt the time was not yet ripe, but kept up the agitation.

Natural
Gas

The Peoples Gas Company had arrived with its lines in 1885 and proceeded to pipe the town and began to supply gas that year. Using gas was a new experience to the people and most of them were afraid of it, and did not know whether to turn on the gas first and then light it, or just how it should be handled. Many singed eyebrows and burned hands resulted, and even some bad burns. The gas pipes were run to the second floors on the outside of the buildings. In grates and stoves T burners were used with broken pieces of fire brick. A can of water was usually placed on the stove or hung before the grates on account of the dry heat. Gas was plentiful and a six room house could be heated for about \$2.00 per month.

— 1886 —

The town continued to grow so that in the spring of 1886 building operations were in full swing.

Oil
Lamps

Some of the more progressive citizens felt that something should be done to light the streets and proposed a tax on merchants and others for oil lamps, but it failed.

Sewers

Individual sewers to the two runs passing through the village were resorted to, but this did not prove satisfactory.

Boardwalks

Ashes and boards were put down for sidewalks by some. Others refused to do that much, and waded through the mud.

Springs and wells furnished the water, and from what we know now of disease germs and their origin, it seems strange the town escaped an epidemic of typhoid fever.

Water

Everyone was a law unto himself. ⁹The time had now come for action, and a few citizens prepared a petition and secured signers to the number of 213.

Petition
for
Borough

This petition stated that Wilkinsburg had 349 freeholders, and that the petition contained a majority of them. The facts in the petition were verified by S. H. McKee on November 6, 1886. The petition was presented to the court and the same day the court ordered it laid before the Grand Jury.

Remon-
strance

The opponents were not asleep, and on that day presented a remonstrance signed by a large number of the inhabitants. It is a curious and interesting fact that the signers of the petition were nearly all new citizens in the town who had purchased lots and built on them, while the majority of the opponents of the borough were old residents of the town. Most of the large owners of land were in opposition to the movement for a borough. Nearly all these old property owners have passed away, but they lived long enough to see their land increase many times in value by reason of their own defeat.

The petitioners were represented by Messrs. R. A. Balph and A. W. Duff, and the remonstrators by John A. Barton.

The Grand Jury reported that they found as a fact that the petition had not been signed by a majority of resident freeholders, and therefore, the prayer should not be granted.

9—Records of James Balph—Silver Anniversary of the Borough.

— 1887 —

Borough
Petitioners
Defeated

“On March 21, 1887, the Court handed down its decision formally refusing the petition.”

Second
Petition

The Progressives were greatly disappointed, but set to work at once with another petition and this time secured 234 signers, and only resident freeholders. The facts were again verified by S. H. McKee and the petition presented to the Court on April 11th, 1887.

Second
Remon-
strance

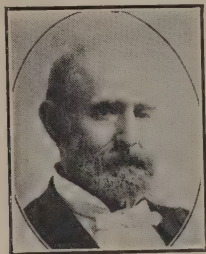
Those opposing also got up a remonstrance and presented it to the Court on April 23, 1887. On June 27, 1887, the Court referred the petition to the Grand Jury, and again the fight was on. Hearings before the Grand Jury lasted several weeks. The petitioners were again represented by Attorneys R. A. Balph and A. W. Duff, the remonstrants by N. S. Williams, Esq.

Battle
Rages

The Grand Jury finally recommended the petition to the Court but five of its members dissented, filing a minority report against the findings of the majority.

¹⁰“This unusual action of these minority members, shows something of the battle that was waged before the Grand Jury. The opposition was still unwilling to submit, and on August 27th, 1887, exceptions were filed to the findings of the Grand Jury. Not content with this, a new petition was circulated and signed by many citizens, protesting against the action of the Grand Jury, and praying the Court to refer the original petition to another Grand Jury. This petition and protest was presented to the Court September 17th, 1887. Honorable J. W. F.

White was the judge presiding in the Court of Quarter Sessions. Before him all the arguments were made upon the exceptions and remonstrances



JUDGE J. W. F. WHITE
HE GRANTED CHARTER.

filed. On October 5th, 1887, the Court dismissed all exceptions filed, over-ruled all objections to the Grand Jury's report, and entered a formal decree confirming the report.

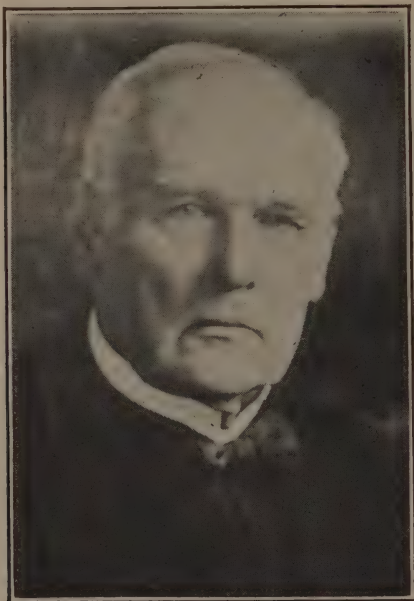
"The long battle was won. Wilkinsburg was a borough. The opposition would not admit defeat, and on October 6th, 1887, the opponents presented another petition to the Court asking that the case be re-opened and reconsidered. This was refused. Later an appeal was taken to the Supreme Court, and shortly after quashed."

Final
Victory

In this somewhat lengthy review of the struggle of the Progressives against those we have come to know as Standpatters, we can, in some measure realize the opposition that had to be overcome, the enemies that would be made, and the sacrifices that followed in order that we might reach the enviable position we now occupy as the first borough in the State.

First
Election

¹¹On December 3rd, 1887, the Court by decree fixed the third Tuesday of February, 1888, as the date of the first election for Borough officers and appointed as election officers William G. Stewart, Judge; S. B. Donaldson and A. Fred Stoner, inspectors. Much discussion was had in securing the right men to fill the respective offices. Men of



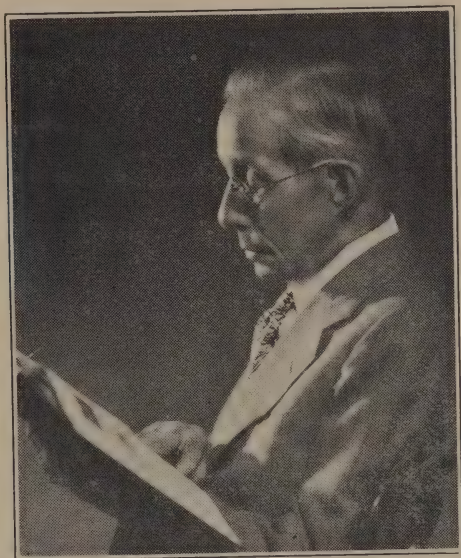
REV. W. C. SMITH, D.D.,
OUR FIRST BURGESS, 1887.

First
Officers

ability, as well as men of integrity, must be chosen. The results were as follows: Reverend W. C. Smith, D.D., Burgess. Dr. Smith was then editor of the Methodist Christian Advocate, and was made

11—Records of James Balph—Borough Silver Anniversary.

a Bishop later. Six councilmen were elected: Thomas W. McCune and James A. Wilson, three



JAMES A. WILSON,
ONE OF FIRST COUNCILMEN, 1887.

years; William Anderson, Sr., and R. W. Beatty, two years; George W. Kayge and R. W. Balph, one year.

The first meeting of the Council was held in the home of Reverend Mr. Smith on March 1st, 1888. Mr. Smith, having been sworn in as Burgess by Judge White, administered the oath of office to all the councilmen. R. W. Beatty acted as secretary pro-tem. Later Mr. Beatty was elected as Secretary, and R. W. Balph, assistant secretary. T. D. Turner was elected and served as the first treasurer

First
Treasurer

First
Street
Commis-
sioner

without pay, and furnished bond in the sum of \$10,000.00. The minutes show considerable discussion over the position of Street Commissioner. He must be a man not afraid to work, a practical man who knew how to handle a pick and shovel. The salary was \$45.00 a month. Benjamin Marsh was the successful candidate and held the office for several years.

First
Solicitor

The late Judge A. W. Duff was the first Borough solicitor.

First
Engineer

The first Borough Engineer was W. G. Wilkins.

The tax levy for Borough purposes for 1888 was only "4½ mills".

Plotting
the Course

What a contrast this first meeting in the home of Mr. Smith would make with such a meeting today! The house was, perhaps, heated with coal grates, lighted with oil lamps, and the members of Council seated about the room with the Secretary near the lamp writing down the proceedings of this first meeting. Now and then one rises to stir the fire, or turn up the lamp. Their deliberations were not disturbed by the garbage man, milk man, great five ton trucks and automobiles rolling over paved streets. There were no clanging bells or horns of fire engines, for there were none (just bucket brigades). No noise of scraping snow off sidewalks, for there was none. The hours pass but they heed them not. Suddenly, the crowing of the cock in a neighbor's backyard makes them aware that it is midnight. They adjourn, and so they pass out into the night. The preacher suggests getting a lantern for there were no lights, but they refuse

and wade home through the mud, looking toward a better day. Does it not seem as though this happened in another country, so long, long ago—and yet so recent?

This year, 1888, Council accepted the plan and plotting of the streets by the Borough Engineer. The first work consisted largely of grading and filling in the holes in the streets, and shoveling out the road drains. No paving was attempted. The valuation at this time was \$2,254,271.00. There was no plunging. This first Council moved with great caution.

Plotting
the Streets

The Pennsylvania Water Company was authorized to lay their lines this year. Natural gas already being in, the town was awakening out of sleep at great speed.

Water

The James Wilson Planing Mill opened for business this year.

Planing
Mill

The I.O.O.F. Temple was erected this year, 1888.

I.O.O.F.
Temple

Wilkinsburg had one livery stable (Turner's) where many horses and conveyances were for hire. One could hire either a buggy, carriage or a riding horse for the day.

Livery
Stable

The sound of the carpenter's hammer and saw could be heard in all parts of the town. Teams hauling all kinds of building material passed each other in the street, often stopping to help pull another out of holes, where the streets were dug up or recently graded.

Boom
Days

The plotted streets were those lying between Rebecca, Hill, Trenton and Swissvale Avenues. These were all dirt streets.

Plotted
Streets

— 1889 —

Water
Revolutionizes
Homes

The year the Pennsylvania Water Company finished its lines and began supplying water to the Borough and citizens. The old rain barrel, the old oaken bucket, and the faithful old pump began their retreat. As washday approached, it had con-



PENNSYLVANIA WATER COMPANY

siderable less drudgery than before. It was rather thrilling to be able to turn the hydrant or spigot for an endless stream of water.

The coming of the water introduced our people to something which they knew little about, the bathtub; strange as that may seem to us in 1940. The old family washtub which was also the family bathtub had served its day and purpose, and must go. All those advantages that pressure water means both in kitchen and bathroom were subjects of discussion for several years. The drudgery of

the home for wife and mother was reduced more than we of this generation can appreciate.

Council authorized the laying of lines through the streets for supplying steam heat to homes and business houses for heating purposes in the same way as they tapped lines for water, thus doing away with individual heating plants.

Steam
Heat

"Let there be light, and there was light," for Council authorized the first experiment in electric street lighting in 1889. Four were placed at one time as a test. How modern they looked. How antiquated oil and gas lights, which some few citizens had on posts in their front yards, now seemed. The oil lamps were encased in a sheet iron house with glass windows, while the gas lights were from a ball or half-moon pipe burner, and the flame rose into the air one to two feet. In great windstorms, both were blown out.

Electric
Lights

Oil and
Gas Lamps

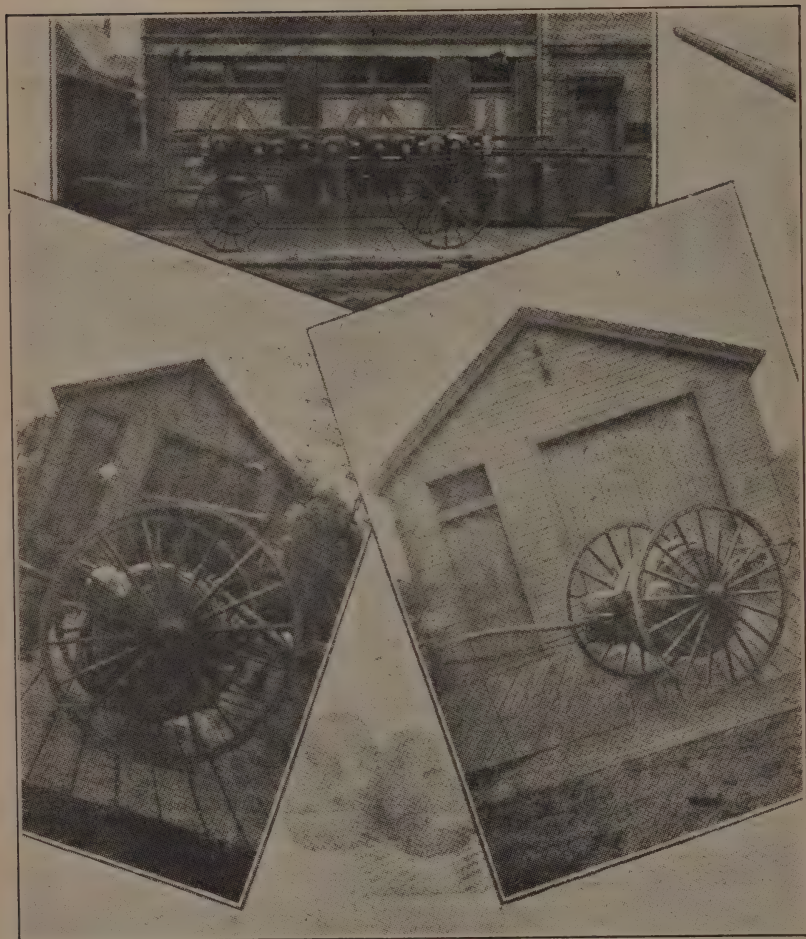
Caldwell and Graham opened their dry-goods store this year.

Caldwell
and
Graham

What a beehive of activity this little self-satisfied village of a couple of years previous had become. The demon of progress seemed to have gotten into everyone, so that the town seemed to be literally thrust forward, as though bent on accounting for all the wasted years of living in mud and darkness. The public utilities vied with each other in getting Council's attention for franchises.

Council now turned its attention to the danger of fire by reason of new frame buildings springing up on every hand which increased the fire hazard. On December 3rd, 1889, the first superintendent of the Volunteer Fire Department was elected, Mr. B. W.

Volunteer
Fire
Department

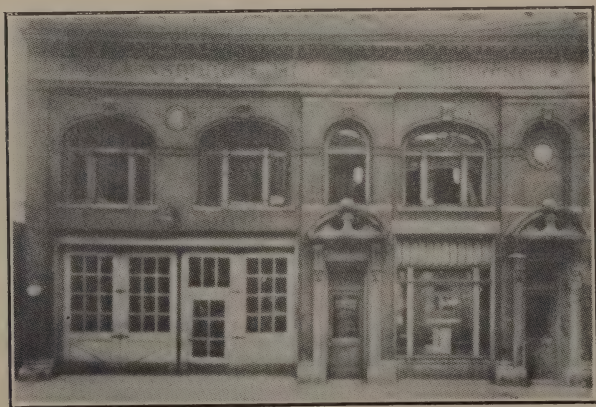


FIRST FIRE FIGHTING APPARATUS, 1890

Carskadden; J. J. Campbell, assistant. The old bucket brigade in times of fire, in which everyone was expected to do his bit, and where there was no authority or director, would no longer suffice. Besides, it was often unnecessarily destructive.

— 1890 —

Council purchased two hose carts and one hook and ladder. (See cut.) These were pulled by men. If the fire was any distance from the engine house, the men were winded or played out by the time they arrived, often times stalling on the hills. Later horses were added which gave a quicker and better service. These volunteers of the early days deserve much praise for their unselfish work.



MUNICIPAL BUILDING—ERECTED 1890.

Morris Graf & Co., mantles and tile work, was established this year.

Morris
Graft



ONE OF THE FIRST TYPE OF TELEPHONES.
PROPERTY OF AUTHOR.

Telephones

Perhaps no one's imagination is capable of drawing a picture of what would happen to our complex life were the telephones all removed. Yet most people over forty can remember their coming. A great deal of mystery surrounded this invention. We feel sure that the greatest imagination of that year, 1890, never dreamed a telephone would be-

come as much a part of a well regulated home as a sewing machine, or that it would ever play the important part in business that it does today. To talk across the continent or over seas,—well, it simply was not on the program. Some people were afraid of the telephone; it seemed simply uncanny. Scores of humorous stories about its introduction could be told, did space permit.

The Telephone Company secured sixty subscribers and Council granted them a franchise in 1890.

For business, it cost \$84.00 a year, and for residence \$75.00 a year. The calls were unlimited. The free district was South Side, Allegheny, Pittsburgh and East Liberty. To talk fifty miles caused the speaker to shout so loud he could be heard for almost a square. If the conversation was prolonged, the speakers at both ends were nearly exhausted, and perspiring freely.

One person manned the switchboard in Wilkinsburg. In 1926 it required 171 employees in our Franklin Exchange, South Avenue. Then the Pittsburgh office had 115 operators. Franklin exchange now handles 16,997 telephones and about 12,000 of these are in Wilkinsburg. Which means that every second citizen has a telephone. Then the instruments were all hung on the wall. (See cut.) If we had seen then, as now, a lineman sitting on top of a pole, seemingly holding a conversation with himself, we would have concluded he had gone mad, and, perhaps, would have called the police.

12,000
Telephones

— 1891 —

First
Paved
Street

Our town continued its growth. At this time Penn Avenue was our principal street. Council had been keeping in step with all the other improvements in town (the Progressives were in power) and they felt that this street should be paved, and passed an ordinance to that effect in 1891. This was the first street paved in town.

— 1892 —

No
Sewer

The Borough of Wilkinsburg was now four years old, with a population of 3,000. It had no sewer system, a dangerous condition, for a body of people this size. Council had not been unmindful of the need, but was rather timid about making the start to secure one.

— 1893 —

On March 4th, 1893, a resolution was adopted in Council appointing a committee to confer with a similar committee for Edgewood and Brushton, (the latter still a borough). It was thought the three boroughs could construct a joint sewage system more cheaply than each could construct its own. Edgewood declined, and Brushton could not make up its mind. Wilkinsburg would not wait, and proceeded to employ engineers to visit and investigate plants of other cities. Several months passed before they reported. Council decided to hold a public meeting for suggestions. A plan was finally adopted which was to cost \$160,000.00. An elec-

tion was held and the same unprogressive crowd did their best to cause the defeat of the bond issue, but the people approved it. The building and completion of the sewage system was \$148,209.13. The entire cost of the system to the close of 1925 was \$402,000.00. Its entire length is 45 miles.

In 1893 Council created a Board of Health. This Board has always done good work in watching over the general health of the community.

Board of
Health

Grover Cleveland (Democrat) was elected to office in 1893, with both houses strongly against him. The Republicans shrieked panic, and scared the people in general. Business collapsed toward the close of 1893, caused partly by the Chicago World's Fair, which closed in October, 1893.

Grover
Cleveland

One heard the cry on every hand, "Loss of confidence", "Fear of tariff reduction", and "Free trade". Mills and factories shut down completely all over the country and business in every line was completely stagnated.

1893
Panic

Tens of thousands of men were idle all over this end of the State. One could travel all around the city and see nothing but smokeless stacks on mills and factories. Great blast furnaces, modern rolling mills, glass factories, a hundred locomotives, thousands of idle freight cars filling the side-tracks; houses, offices, store rooms, wagons, machinery—everything was idle.

Idle Mills,
R. R. Car
Building

Passing along through the coke and coal regions, one found thousands of coke ovens and immense coal works standing bleak and cold, with no sign of life about them. It was a terrifying sight. It ap-

Deserted
Coke and
Coal
Region

peared as though there had been a great migration, and the whole population had deserted the country, and left it to go to ruin.

Army of
Idle Men

When one returned to the main highways, towns and cities, here were great throngs of men congregated in idleness. The saloons were always filled to overflowing. Wilkinsburg being purely residential, suffered terribly.

— 1894 —

Coxey's
Army

Coxey's Army came through here and marched on Washington, D. C., demanding work and the righting of grievances. Coxey was arrested and jailed.

Charity

When cold weather arrived in the fall of 1894, the panic was at its worst stage. The philanthropic associations in the city, then all separate, were simply swamped, but did all they could. Many of the wealthy families gave unstintingly to charity. The Pittsburgh Council voted money to put men to work in the parks at \$1.00 per day and gave them their money each evening to keep them from starving. (Of this panic, the author speaks from experience and observation.)

City of
Pittsburgh
Pays
\$1.00 Day

Soup
Houses

Police stations were filled to overflowing by idle men seeking lodging. Soup houses were established all over the city, and the waiting lines were a quarter of a mile long. Newspapers advertised any and every kind of job free, and there were three hundred men for every available job.

It was, perhaps, the most grievous panic ever

experienced in the United States, and regarded as a purely manufactured one by Wall Street, at that.

— 1895-1896 —

The panic that began in 1893 was of such severity that there was little evidence of recovery until the late spring of 1895, and all through the balance of the year recovery was slow.

Recovery

— 1897 —

¹²The first electric cars came to Wilkinsburg in 1897. The record indicates they came in on Wood Street, and also on Penn Avenue, stopping where the No. 75 car now stops on Hay Street, in front of a few one-story buildings located there. Both lines began service to the Borough the same year. It was, indeed, an interesting sight to watch one of these cars approaching when loaded. The short truck was placed in the center of the car; the seats ran lengthwise, and the front and rear platforms were open at first, later they were closed. Everyone who succeeded in getting aboard after the seats were filled, and standing room inside exhausted, filled the rear platform and steps. This weighted the car down in the rear, causing it to stick up in front at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. The cars were heated with coal stoves. The conductor battled his way through this mob collecting fares. It required twenty years for the Railways Company to realize the wisdom in adopting the "pay as you enter" system, and save this useless labor. As the car approached over the uneven,

First
Electric
Cars

¹²—Records of Pittsburgh Railways Co.

crooked roadbed, it swayed and bounced, and seemed to leap forward frog fashion.

Village
100 Years
Old

On December 20th, 1897, Burgess James Horner sent out a large number of requests to representative citizens to meet him and prepare a proper program for the celebration of the one hundredth birthday of Wilkinsburg as a town. This was set for June 24-25, 1898. A large committee was created to handle the various arrangements. Space permits us to mention only a few of the more prominent names: Dr. John Semple, T. J. Keenan, Arthur Stewart, Professor Daniel Carhart, James Woodwell, S. H. Thompson, Reverend A. A. Lambing, P. J. Pierce, and Reverend C. L. Alspach, with many other citizens of the Borough.

— 1898-1899 —

100th
Anniver-
sary

On June 24th and 25th, 1898, Wilkinsburg celebrated its one hundredth birthday as a town, according to the plan as laid out last year. The celebration was sponsored by The Old Settlers Association, Burgess James Horner, President. There was a big parade in which six bands participated, a special bicycle parade, speaking, sports, and other events of interest featured the two days' celebration, closing with fireworks.

— 1900 —

Library

Many of our citizens have, no doubt, wondered why Andrew Carnegie never provided a library for Wilkinsburg inasmuch as he established them in other towns of lesser importance. In 1900 Andrew

Carnegie offered to provide \$50,000.00 for a library if Wilkinsburg would provide a suitable site. The offer did not receive attention from Council until 1902 when Council passed a resolution providing for a proposed bond issue for this purpose. Burgess James Horner vetoed it because the resolution did not give the people a clear understanding of the cost and maintenance. The veto was sustained, and Wilkinsburg never got the library, which loss most of the citizens, no doubt, regret, notwithstanding the good work of our local library, which is so poorly housed.



VINTAGE OF ABOUT 1900—CHAIN DRIVE—
SOLID TIRES—CRANKED ON SIDE.

The Yellow Street Car line on Forbes Street—Mellon's—came in over Kelly Street.

We have been referred to in the past as the "Holy City", but mostly in derision. Who first gave us this name is not known. It was coined about 1900. Just why Wilkinsburg was given this name

Yellow
St. Car
Line

Holy
City

is purely a matter of conjecture. It probably came about from the fact that it is a town of churches, having twenty-two, and that we have always had an unusually high type of civic life. It seems more than a mere coincidence that when the various homes and institutions now located within our borders came to look for a site, they passed by other towns and went outside the borders of the city purposely to secure such advantages. They seemed to have a desire to get as far away as possible from the baneful influence of the saloon and the liquor business.

The new citizens found our town a haven for raising families, and they brought with them high ideals, thus adding their strength to ours. That this is true seems certain, because we have never had what could be called a tough element among us. Neither has Wilkinsburg had any dishonest elections. It seems to have had those qualifications and conditions that any institution would seek for inmates of homes, or for schools. Wilkinsburg has three homes for the aged, and the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is just across the line at Edgewood.

The Borough officials, with some few exceptions, have been men of high type who labored to maintain our high ideals and traditions, especially Sabbath observance, and their efforts in this direction have brought us into the limelight.

There have been times when the changes in administration have caused a letting down of the bars to our hurt, but not for long as another election would again swing the pendulum back the other

way. In our elections we could always be counted on to support the Reform candidates with a good margin of the votes cast. We have been completely free from dives and that demonstrative, rough element that brings reproach on any community wherever it is found. Our schools have been the very best, and those in charge of the schools have, perhaps, leaned a little toward the puritanic customs of conduct for the more advanced departments which has, to say the least, not been to their hurt. It will not, then, be hard to understand how the absence in our town of those things that are regarded as regular in other towns and cities would cause some wag or wit to slur us, as "Holier than Thou", or "The Holy City". When spoken of in this way, no citizen will feel called upon to make any apology.

— 1901 —

The leaders of Wilkinsburg civic affairs have never been remiss in recognizing the obligations to the county, state or nation. When President William McKinley was assassinated in Buffalo, New York, on September 6th, 1901, Wilkinsburg, like many other towns, held services on the day of his burial. Burgess James Horner issued a proclamation calling on the citizens to close their places of business and attend services, which were held in the South Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church at 2:30 P. M. September 19th, 1901. The principal speakers for the occasion were John A. Keys and Reverend J. A. Burnett.

McKinley's
Assassina-
tion

— 1902 —

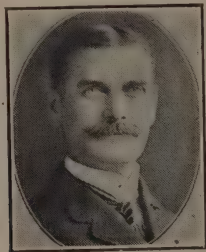
J. D.
Anderson
Retires

Professor J. D. Anderson retired as Superintendent of Borough Schools after a service of twenty-two years. Professor J. L. Allison was elected as his successor.

— 1903 —

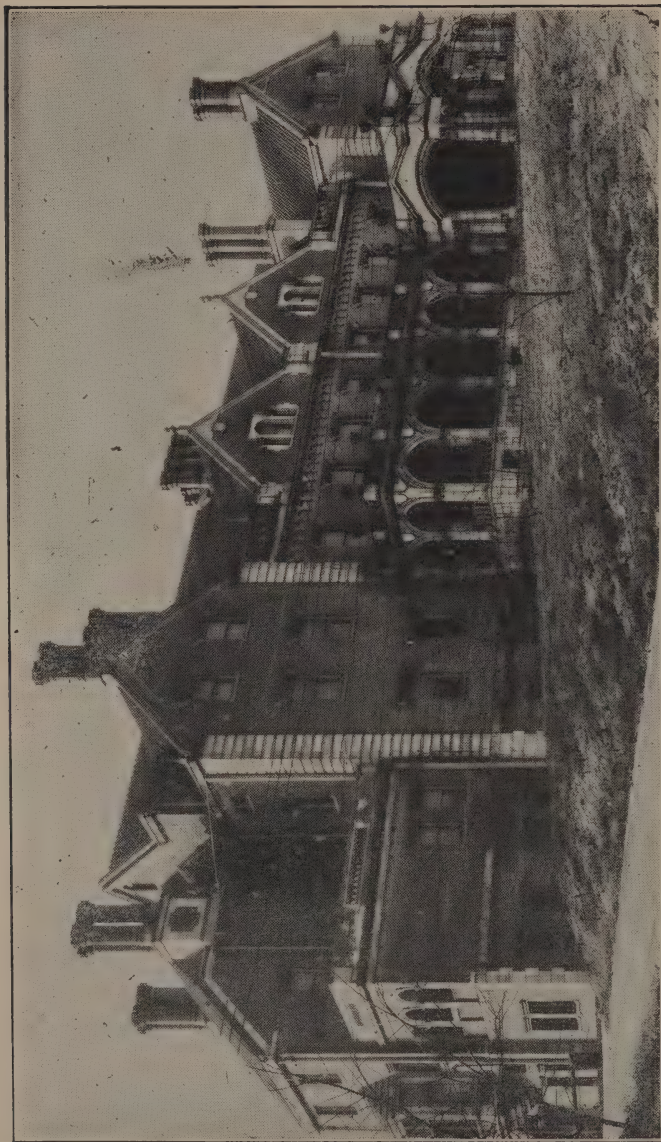
Lovejoy
Mansion

Wilkinsburg people have always shown a splendid interest in anyone trying to do something that would add to the attractiveness of the town or of the neighboring boroughs or cities. A cut of the Lovejoy Mansion is shown here and reference is made to it because of its proximity to the Borough line. It is located on Braddock Avenue between Kelly and South Avenues. It is three stories high, built of stone, and has a tile roof. It is still standing. The mansion, barn, and grounds were all planned on a magnificent scale. It was reported



F. T. F. LOVEJOY.

that Mr. Lovejoy, the owner, purposed to surpass anything west of the Alleghenies in elegance of finish. Two of the unique features of the mansion were an elevator and an underground tunnel to the



LOVEJOY MANSION—ERECTED 1903—RAZED 1929.

barn. It sits on an elevation that commands a view of Wilkinsburg, Edgewood, Rankin, part of Braddock and Homewood. Its construction began about 1903 and work ceased about 1905, because Mr. Lovejoy became financially involved. It was later taken over by a number of creditors and an effort made to dispose of it, but no purchaser could be found because it is so large. An effort was made to turn it into apartments, which proved impractical. The taxes were very great, and finally it was turned into a machine shop for building automobile bodies. It is pathetic, indeed, to see such a lovely home profaned by the use to which it is put now, and one's heart goes out in sympathy and pity to the one-time owner, who was so unfortunate as not to be permitted to realize his dream. It was estimated that the cost to finish it would be \$200,000.00. The west side of town is certainly the poorer because of this calamity.

— 1904 —

Woodlawn
Cemetery

A very pressing need was supplied in 1904 when Woodlawn Cemetery was opened in Wilkinsburg. The town had been using Beulah and Homewood Cemeteries up to that time, and it was felt by many that we should have our own. The location is ideal. The plan is well designed, and it will meet our needs for many years to come.

— 1905 —

Parks

In the planning of the town no one seems to have thought about making provision for a park. About

1905 Council purchased a piece of ground fronting on Todd and Hay Streets for a park and another strip at the junction of William Penn and Lincoln Highways. Neither of these meet the real need. The new Frick Park will, no doubt, help the Wilkinsburg people very much in the near future. It is just over the line on the West Side.

The School Board moved in the right direction when they made provisions for a recreation ground and established Graham Field, situated on Penn Avenue on the hill near the cemetery. It is used for baseball and football, and is owned by the school board. A large plot of twelve acres on Laketon Avenue, on which the new Turner School is being erected, will also have a recreation field, so that there will be one in that end of town in the future. In looking ahead so far, the School Board is not making the mistake Council made in the early days in overlooking a park.

Graham
Field

Council is also to be highly commended for the purchase of nine acres of ground between Coal and Swissvale Avenues near the Semple School for playgrounds. Already a ball field has been made and there is provision for flooding the ground for skating in winter. Provisions will also be made on this field for other sports. Because of the congested conditions in most all towns, very few vacant spaces have been left for the children to play in, so they must go to the streets and alleys which are filled with automobile traffic. Thus these playgrounds have become an absolute necessity, and should be provided for each ward, and no doubt will be.

Play
Grounds

Turning from playgrounds to charity work, it is a great pleasure to take note of the work done by that splendid organization, the Philanthropic Society, which was the outgrowth of several other organizations. In 1905 there was organized what was known as "The Joint Committee for Philanthropic Work". It was made up of various members from Women's Clubs, and societies of the various churches to care for the destitute and poor of the Borough. This first organization was headed by Mrs. Charles D. Armstrong who served for two years. She was succeeded by Mrs. William E. Evans under whose administration the committee became a chartered organization with the title of "The Philanthropic Society of Wilkinsburg". Others who served with a high degree of efficiency and faithfulness were Miss Agnes Taylor, Mrs. James Balph and Mrs. C. K. Kurtz. This organization disbanded in 1922 to the very great regret of a very large number of its supporters and friends, and its work has, in a fashion, been undertaken by societies of all kinds in the city. Since its dissolution, there has scarcely been a winter in which its usefulness and worth were not forceably brought to the attention of the churches. The society came to the aid of the suffering with coal and food, and their district nurse was very active in relieving suffering. In addition to Council's support and that of individuals, each year the union Thanksgiving service turned its offering over to this splendid organization. A number of smaller boroughs around us have similar organizations doing good work.

— 1906 —

In this year a very bad epidemic of typhoid fever broke out in the Borough. The Board of Health fixed the blame on the water supply, and a suit was instituted against the Pennsylvania Water Company to compel them to supply pure water. The suit was successful and resulted in the building of a filtration plant, completed in 1910. We have not been troubled in this respect since its completion.

Typhoid
Epidemic

— 1907 —

In 1907 the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company went into the hands of receivers, and its effect on Wilkinsburg was likened unto a bolt out of a clear sky. A very large number of our citizens are employed by this company, and its failure affected us greatly. And not Wilkinsburg alone, for it was only a forerunner of a large number of banks, brokers, and merchants, who followed suit all over the state and reaching over into New York and New Jersey. Banks called their loans, the stock exchange closed its doors, building stopped, and almost complete paralysis of business resulted. The banks refused to pay out money, and the clearing house recommended the issuing of what was called scrip, which was nothing short of individual money backed by the firms who issued it. It was not accepted at face. Stores and saloons charged from three to ten percent for cashing scrip. Scrip was used by the railroads, steel mills, and in many lines of business. When men received their

W. E. & M.
Company
Receivers

Scrip

pay in this scrip, they were afraid of it, and it seemed to them as though they had not been paid at all. It was only a makeshift, but it answered the purpose for the financial stringency that was upon the country, and it carried us over that critical period. It did, however, accomplish one thing; it did more to force the passage of the Federal Reserve Banking Law, which the politicians had been playing with for years, than anything else. It is not at all likely that we shall ever again be called upon to use scrip. The World War demonstrated this.

Reserve
Banking
Law

— 1908-1909 —

Expansion

The borough continued its rapid growth and there was little vacant ground left on the west side of town, and the same was largely true of the north, so that it seemed plain to real estate men and those who looked far ahead that our boundary lines could be extended in only two directions—northeast and southeast, that is over the Penn Avenue district and toward East Pittsburgh. The logical outlet of the latter town was toward Wilkinsburg, which resulted in the optioning of, and later the purchase of all the vacant ground between East Pittsburgh and Wilkinsburg, most of which was farming land with some timber. The same action was taken, but not so fully nor so early (owing to the indecision as to the route the William Penn Highway would take) out the Penn Avenue Pike.

— 1910 —

Ardmore

The Pittsburgh Railway Company agreed to build a line to East Pittsburgh, so the ground at Ardmore

was plotted and put on the market, and the street car lines were laid and began operation in 1910. The boulevard was completed at once, and this territory began to develop rapidly. Beautiful homes sprang up, and in a short time it became a beautiful residential district, which is now known as Forest Hills Borough. The street car service was shortened one-half between here and East Pittsburgh, and supplied with better cars.

— 1911 —

There had been gathering through the years a powerful public opinion in favor of eliminating the three very dangerous railroad crossings in the borough. There had been some terrible accidents at these crossings, when as many as four sacrificed

Elimination
Railroad
Crossing



PENNSYLVANIA R. R. CO. GRADE CROSSING.

their lives at one time. The citizens became very much aroused in 1911 and Council passed an ordinance which was approved October 9, 1911, the purpose of which was to abolish these crossings. Another ordinance followed authorizing articles of agreement between the Borough and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and another authorizing a tri-agreement between the city of Pittsburgh, Wilkinsburg and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was signed December 2, 1911.

— 1912 —

The delay in eliminating the dangerous railroad street crossing continued, and so did the slaughter; as many as four killings at a time. Public sentiment was greatly aroused. The Railroad Company placed watchmen on both sides of the tracks at all the crossings. Immediately after a terrible slaughter by a fast train, a public meeting was held in the First Presbyterian Church on October 12th, 1912, and a demand was made on Council and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company that they take immediate steps to stop these killings and eliminate these crossings. On December 26, 1912, a street closing ordinance was passed, but was not acceptable to the railroad, and another delay resulted. Nothing was done and the matter dragged on through 1913.

On or about the beginning of 1912 the citizens of Wilkinsburg began to be reminded of the passing of the years since they started on the journey as a borough, and that soon a quarter of a century would have passed. It was decided to celebrate

properly the silver anniversary. Committees were appointed and arrangements made to surpass all the preceding celebrations.

The dates chosen for the celebration were October 3, 4, 5, 1912. Space does not permit of a detailed account of the greatest celebration in the history of the town up to that time, but for three days there was something of interest going on every minute. There were all kinds of games—races, contests of strength, hammer throwing, fencing, pole vaulting, parades, concerts, and finally one grand parade ending in a barbecue. All the then living officials of the borough, living in or near Wilkinsburg, participated in the celebration. The affair was a complete success. The general committee was as follows: Burgess Frank B. Tomb, J. E. Beatty, J. M. Lindsay, J. M. McNall, G. H. Blackmore, Thomas McMurray, T. D. Lynch, J. S. McKelvey and Jacob Weinman.

CHAPTER SIX

WORLD WAR EPOCHAL PERIOD

Main Street—Which way business—World War—Epidemic—Home Guard—Armistice Day—Cost of Living—Fire Department motorized—Expansion—Railroad crossings elimination-celebration — Only statue — Building resumed — Swissvale and Laketon Avenues widened—Silent decrees of business—Clubs—New spirit—William Penn Highway—Chimes—Outstanding men.

— 1913 —



Change

THE year of 1913 opened, it appeared that another epoch making period was about due. Trenton Avenue had become the undisputed business street for the west side of town, but on the east side there had been a quiet struggle going on continuously between Wood Street and Penn Avenue with Wood Street usually carrying off the honors. It had been recognized for so many years as "Main Street", the most important business street in the borough—because of many important factors. These factors were the railroad station, the post office, the borough building, the banks, office buildings, and the most pretentious church building in the borough. All of these were located on Wood Street, or were approached by this street. Logically, however, it was not the business street, nor did it deserve the development received. At best, it was only a side street and very short. On the other hand, Penn

Avenue was the main highway through the town from east to west. It was the oldest street in town and extended the entire length of the borough. The owners of the buildings on Penn Avenue (most of them of the small frame type) would, with few exceptions, neither sell nor improve. A great improvement was under way. The railroad station was to be moved, and perhaps the post office. A great cement wall was to be erected across the southern end of Wood Street, hedging it in. Which way would business move? Ross Avenue and South Avenue had already developed somewhat. Up to this time, all business improvements were promoted very largely by individual initiative, or at the best by small groups.

In the Presidential election of 1912 Taft was overwhelmingly defeated, and the Democratic Party returned to power for the first time since the administration of Grover Cleveland. When Woodrow Wilson took office in 1913 threats of wage cuts were disturbing the country. Mills and factories went on part time. This affected Wilkinsburg, as well as other towns, so that business slumped badly. In addition, the United States was having trouble with Mexico and President Wilson sent troops into Mexico, among which were part of our Militia to which many of our citizens belonged. This caused considerable anxiety. The strained relations existing between the great powers in Europe and the very delicate situation in the Balkans were being discussed in public print. Would war ensue? If so, what magnitude would it reach? Would it involve the United States? Many writers believed

Business
Slump

that at the bottom of the trouble was the commercial trade relationship and the striving after the commerce of the backward nations of the world. This had produced a state of relations so delicate that it only required a match to the powder to start things. This was provided by the death of the Austrian Crown Prince in Serbia.

— 1914 —

The World War was declared in August, 1914, and the effect on industry was like magic. Factories and mills that had been on part time began operating in full, and our people were back on full time once more. The European war took the foreign laborers by the thousands, and wages advanced rapidly. Foreign buyers began to buy up food, and all kinds of other materials, and immediately living costs began to advance. Meantime, the lawmakers seemed to feel that going into war with Mexico and perhaps participating in the European struggle were more than a possibility, so they passed the Federal Reserve Banking Law, already referred to. All through 1914 there followed in rapid succession events and questions of such great importance that the nervous tension of the people was very great, and they scanned the papers eagerly, morning and evening, for the latest war news,—all other news being secondary. The war had been raging in Europe for two years. The United States had been furnishing much war material and money. President Wilson had done his utmost to keep this country out of the war, and as another presidential election came on, the Demo-

War
1914

cratic Party used the phrase "He kept us out of the war" to good advantage in the campaign. Mr. Wilson was re-elected for a second term.

The slaughter in Europe was at its height. Germany was carrying everything before her, and it looked as though civilization had failed. Old Prophecies were dug up, published and read with eagerness. Everything that human ingenuity could devise for the purpose of destroying life on a great scale was brought into play. Poison gas, poison bullets, bombs, shells, immense guns such as had never been employed before were used. Defenseless towns and hamlets, we read, were shelled, and unheard of cruelties perpetrated on its old men, women, and children, until the heart sickened and cried out for revenge on a race of supposedly human beings who had turned into savage brutes. We were not yet in the war, but still Germany was sinking our defenseless ships, drowning our citizens,—some of them being women and children—and warning us off the seas. A cry finally went up to save civilization, and make the world safe for democracy. All this, and more, was what greeted the eyes every morning in the press all through 1916 and part of 1917, prior to the declaration of war,—and worse afterward. There were drives for funds for the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the Young Men's Christian Association; in Wilkinsburg as well as other towns and cities throughout the country.

Terrible
Slaughter

Cry for
Revenge

Drives

Fire
Department
Motorized

In the meantime, a number of important events had taken place in town, notwithstanding we were at war elsewhere. The fire department was

motorized in 1914, the year the World War began. We had grown so fast and the limits of the borough had been so extended that the horse drawn engines were not fast enough, although they had done excellent work. The spirit of the times demanded speed, so the horses were moved back to street work, and the department motorized.

Railroad
Crossing
Elimination

On March 9th, 1914, a new substitute ordinance for the elimination of the railroad crossings was passed by Council. It was accepted by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and arrangements began at once to eliminate the crossings. It must be said to the credit of the railroad officials that they were as anxious as our people to eliminate the crossings, but it was such a tremendous job and so many obstacles confronted them that they were compelled to move slowly.



J. REN WYLIE

— 1915 —

Extension

A considerable number of people living just over the line in the direction of Laketon Road, also up in the direction of the cemetery petitioned the borough to be taken in, so Council again extended the borough limits in 1915 in the neighborhood of Laketon Road, extending them on up the hill and across to the city line in the direction of Brushton, also in the northeasterly direction, taking in Graham Athletic Field and beyond.

Mr. J. Ren Wylie was elected to the Legislature this year, 1915, for this District. Mr. Wylie is in the real estate and insurance business, and is also active in church work in the Borough.

— 1916 —

Grade
Crossing
Elimination
Celebration

Great preparations had been made for the proper celebration of the grade crossing elimination. June 8, 9 and 10, 1916, were chosen for this purpose. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company had completed its great task of eliminating the grade crossings at Wilkinsburg, Brushton, Homewood and Edgewood at a cost of \$3,000,000.00 and the building of two new stations at a cost of \$200,000.00. The company began at Homewood at zero and raised the track until it reached a height of twelve feet ending at Edgewood. Work began November 27th, 1912, and its completion was celebrated on the above dates. The railroad magazine "Information", issue of July 18, 1916, calls this celebration the most remarkable three day celebration ever recorded in



PENNSYLVANIA R. R. STATION—BUILT 1916.

American civic history. The parade was four miles long, was witnessed by 75,000 people, and both local papers—the Call and the Sentinel, issued special editions describing and picturing our town from every angle. The Pittsburgh papers devoted seventy columns to a description of this celebration. The Pittsburgh and Pitcairn shops were closed, and their divisions of the parade showed almost every department and calling in the business of railroad-ing from the trackman, locomotive, and equipment departments to the telegraph departments. All had floats showing just how it was done. Thirty-six departments in all were represented. All borough officials and departments were likewise represented, as were all the merchants. Games and sports of every kind were provided, and the great parade on June 10th was the climax. The three outstanding men directing this crossing elimination

work were, for the borough Councilman Samuel A. Taylor, for the railroad company A. E. Shand, chief engineer, and F. M. Sawyer, construction engineer.



SAMUEL A. TAYLOR,
CONSULTING ENGINEER.

Perhaps nowhere in the country has a piece of work of such magnitude been brought to completion with such good will on the part of all concerned as was this. This was evidenced by the banquet tendered the railroad officials by the citizens on the last night of the celebration.

The one and only statue in the Borough of Wilkinsburg is that of Abraham Lincoln situated at the junction of William Penn and Lincoln Highways. To our street commissioner, William Ewing, belongs the credit of arousing the enthusiasm of the school children to save their pennies, nickels and dimes until sufficient had been saved to enable them to purchase the statue of the Great Emancipator and President. The unveiling ceremony took place June 9, 1916. Mr. Ewing presided, Reverend T. D. Edgar, D.D., gave the invocation, Superintendent J. L. Allison presented the statue on behalf of the

Lincoln
Statue

children, and Councilman J. M. Lindsay accepted on behalf of the borough. Reverend George Taylor, D.D., delivered an address on "Lincoln". This was part of the celebration program of the Grade Crossing Elimination.

— 1917 —

Mr. J. Ren Wylie was re-elected to the Legislature from this District for 1917 and 1918.

U. S.
Declares
War

On April 2nd, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson went before both houses of Congress and recommended a declaration of war against Germany, which was made. Great numbers of men were drafted, manufacturing establishments of every description were commandeered by the government, concentration camps were established—our nearest one was near the Oakmont Country Club,—and building in Wilkinsburg, as well as all over the country, stopped. Prices of living advanced rapidly until flour sold as high as \$16.00 a barrel, potatoes \$1.25 a peck, and prices of sugar, butter and eggs mounted skyward, as did those of shoes and clothing. Quickly a food dictator was established in an attempt to hold prices down, and he accomplished much in this respect. Many of the skilled men were taken to erect training camps, both in this country and abroad. Wages advanced greatly. Labor advanced to \$5.00 and \$6.00 a day. Skilled labor, such as plasterers, carpenters and brick layers reached as high as \$16.00 and \$18.00 a day. These became so scarce that it was a case of the highest bidder for this kind of skilled labor. Clerks' and stenographers' wages advanced from \$60.00 to

Food
Prices

Wages

\$110.00 and up. Some of the married men entered Young Men's Christian Association work. A number of our physicians volunteered and left for the front, and also many of the women nurses. Liberty Bonds were sold to people and the windows of the buyers marked. The spirit of patriotism swept across the land like a flame. Phrases such as "Are you doing your bit", and others greeted one everywhere. Sewing bandages, knitting socks, sweaters and mittens was the order everywhere. Even the firemen and police in their stations were to be found knitting for the boys at the front. Women donned overalls and went to wiping engines, driving trucks and running elevators. They went into factories, and are still in them, and into other occupations never filled by women before. Later on came a plea from the government for everyone to make gardens and grow everything possible. Then it was that the hills and valleys blossomed like a rose. Every vacant lot in Wilkinsburg and on the outskirts was cultivated. Some plowed up lawns. Men and women who before did scarcely any work with their hands were found tilling their gardens. Then came Christmas, and we were sending packages to the boys overseas and in the camps. The world witnessed an exhibition of efficiency and power to accomplish the almost impossible such as had never before been recorded in history. The great corporations loaned their most able men to the government for a salary of \$1.00 a year. Our greatest men in railroad construction and operation, and in building construction,—men of great executive ability,—were sent to France to make

Bandages,
Knitting

Women
Enter
Factories

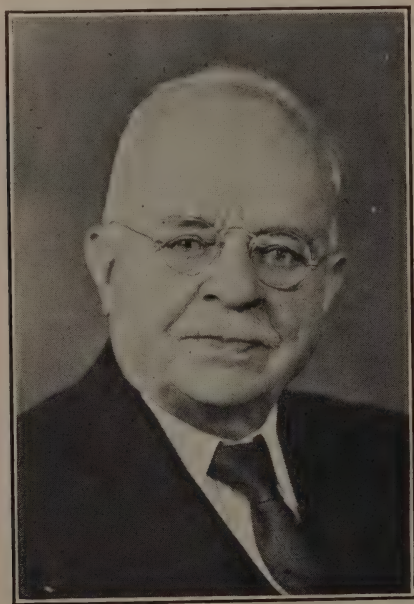
Gardens

Experts Go
to France

ready for the coming of the boys, and they did it. Equipping and training an army of two million and sending them across the sea without the loss of a ship was the most thrilling and inspiring accomplishment the world has ever witnessed.

Library

In 1917 the Branch of the Braddock Carnegie Library was taken over by Council and has since been supported and conducted by them. Mr. Fred S. Evans has been secretary since it was first established here. Mr. Evans has been engaged in this line of work for more than forty years. He entered this work with the Carnegie Library at Braddock in 1899.



FRED S. EVANS, LIBRARIAN.

— 1918 —

In the fall of 1918 there appeared what the medical men thought was influenza, as we had known it, except that this type of flu, as we came to know it, acted quickly and was very deadly. The physicians first began to treat it as they treated the influenza in former years, but without success because of the unusual debilitating attack on the heart. Before the physicians finally diagnosed it properly, it had carried off tens of thousands. It became more terrible than the Egyptian plague. It was supposed to have originated in Spain (hence it was called Spanish influenza), then spread to France, England, Germany, and crossed the sea on ships and spread through the United States and Mexico.

Flu
Epidemic
Deadly

Churches, theatres, saloons, and all places of public gathering were closed by the health authorities in an attempt to stamp it out. Hospitals were filled to overflowing, and in the smaller towns, churches, Young Men's Christian Association buildings, and store rooms were turned into hospitals. Nurses were scarce, and many nurses died of the disease. A number of nurses who had married volunteered for service and did great work. In Wilkinsburg whole families were taken. Sometimes the father and mother only were taken and the little children left; and again all the children might be taken, leaving only the father and mother. These conditions prevailed all over the country. It acted like the black death. Philadelphia, on October 17th, 1918, recorded 1,789 deaths for the day.

It was said to be the worst pestilence the world had ever experienced.

Saloons
Closed

Be it said to the everlasting shame of the liquor business and saloons, they were the worst complainers against being closed up.

Mayor
Babcock
Overrules

In the city they secured the sympathetic ear of Mayor E. V. Babcock, and, under the guise of getting the churches and places of amusement open for the people, tried to over-ride the State health authorities. Mayor Babcock issued a proclamation allowing churches and saloons to open, and also places of amusement. The saloons, some theatres, and a few of the churches opened in the city,—none of the latter in Wilkinsburg. This was roundly denounced and the State authorities at once came on and arrested large numbers of saloon keepers and theatre owners, and compelled them to close again after having been open for two days. Mayor Babcock became scared and rescinded his order, but he did not escape the further denunciation of the press and the pulpit. Most of the Protestant churches of the Evangelical faith remained closed.

Babcock
Denounced
by State
Officers

Two
Million
Called

During the year 1918 the government called two million more men for service abroad. All men between the ages of 18 and 31, and 31 to 45 were compelled to register, and fill out a questionnaire. Great numbers responded with little or no complaint.

Home
Guard

Affairs in Europe were so serious that it was thought wise to organize a home guard. Men ranging in age from 40 to 45 joined, and drilled each week at the High School building on Wallace Avenue, also on the vacant lots and in the streets.

of the town. Reference is made to the war because whatever was done affected Wilkinsburg as it affected every other part of the country, and thus we may see how the community reacted to the various conditions that arose from time to time.

The morning of November 11th, 1918, dawned and everyone went to his task as usual, little thinking that before the setting of the sun that day there would be brought to a close the greatest struggle and tale of human misery that has ever afflicted mankind since time began. Early in the afternoon the message came, and travelled everywhere, that the Germans had sued for peace. Fighting had stopped and both armies had stacked their arms. Then it was that there broke forth in every town, city, village and hamlet such a demonstration of pent up emotion as this generation has never witnessed. Mill, locomotive and steamboat whistles were let loose. Automobile horns and every noise-making device that could be found was put to work. People streamed from the stores and office buildings into the streets, crying, laughing, and embracing each other. Men in the mills and factories stopped work, and the plants were forced to close for the day. Street railways and railroads sent special cars and trains to bring the workmen home. In the city tons and tons of confetti, ticker tape, and streamers were thrown from the office building windows. Some caught on window sills, wires, poles and projections, and the currents of air between the high buildings kept all this paper flying in the air until the business district resembled a great, howling snow storm, and the streets them-

Armistice
Day

selves were hidden from view. So the day and far into the night was given to celebrating the ending of the most terrible and cruel war of all wars.

No
Building

The amount of building was greatly limited from 1915 to 1917, and in the latter part of 1917 and during 1918 it almost completely stopped all over the country. There was no provision whatever for the natural increase, nor for that which was bound to follow the return of the soldiers. During their absence there was much doubling up of families for many married men had gone to the front.

— 1919 —

House
Shortage

When in 1919 the boys commenced to return from abroad, they returned to the camps, and were mustered out of service from them. Their return created a demand for houses, which, in turn, caused rents to mount skyward, doubling and tripling. In the meantime, living costs as well as building materials advanced to unheard of prices. This, of course, meant a similar advance in the price of houses already built. These sold, usually, for more than double the price originally paid. This continued through 1919 and 1920.

— 1920 —

Rents

In 1920 rents reached such a peak that great hardships were the result. It was estimated that half of the home owners and renters were compelled to double up and take roomers in order to meet the rent, taxes, and high cost of living. The country was not yet settled enough to encourage building to any extent.

Mr. John Sperling, one of the older merchants, died during this year, 1920. Mr. Sperling served one term in Council, 1893-1895.



JOHN SPERLING, PENN AND MILL STS.

— 1921 —

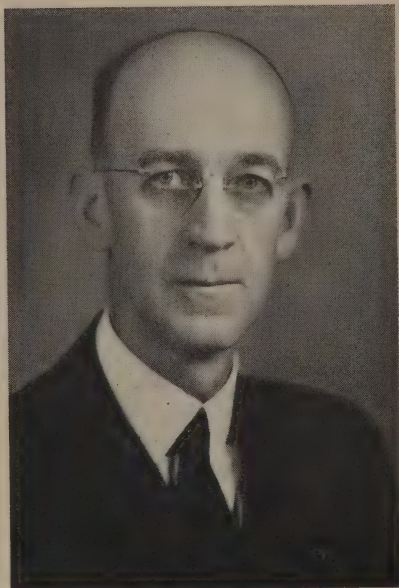
In 1921 a building campaign set in in Wilkinsburg and all around the outlying towns. Vacant ground in plots were developed, and houses sprang up, almost like magic. There was a decided departure from the old way in which the individual had his plans drawn to meet his views and then had a contractor build his house. The new way was

Building
Revived

for the contractor to buy the ground, build the houses and sell them. It gave the contractor greater liberty to add the latest and most artistic decorations and conveniences both to the interior and the exterior. This he did, and it resulted in a much more pleasing and useful type of house. On the other hand, it also gave him the liberty of substituting cheaper materials in the construction, especially in the places where it was covered up, and the purchaser in a great measure bought the old, proverbial "pig in a poke". But on account of the high cost of building materials and wages, these buildings had to be both sold and rented for high prices in order to meet the interest, taxes, and insurance. The net result of the building or buying proposition as a whole seems to have been to make the struggle for existence on the part of the middle classes even harder from two angles. First, there was created a desire for better and more artistic homes, furnishings and wearing apparel to correspond. Second, in thousands of cases both husband and wife are working to make ends meet, and if wages should be reduced or unemployment result, the struggle could not be sustained, and foreclosure proceedings would result, and all they had originally invested would be lost to the mortgagee. Great numbers of people have been and are now living far beyond their means with little hope of coming through. The war, then, has not been costly to Europe alone, but to us, also; and not in taxes only, as will be seen by this brief reference. The three years of building now began to show results, and for the first time since 1915 the supply of



FLOYD H. CARSON,
PRINCIPAL HIGH SCHOOL.



ROBERT E. BEATON,
PRINCIPAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL.

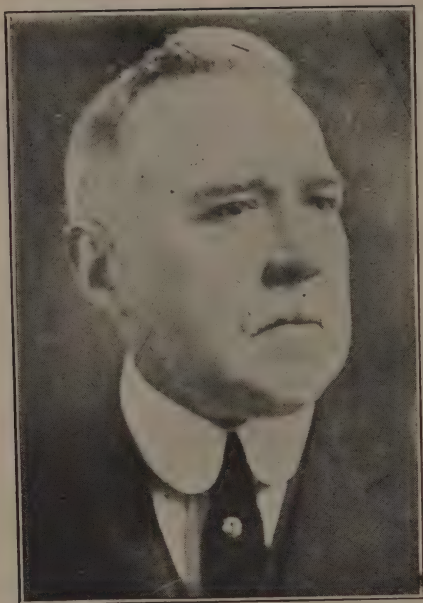


JAMES E. HINDMAN,
SOLICITOR—SCHOOL BOARD,
1905-1939.*



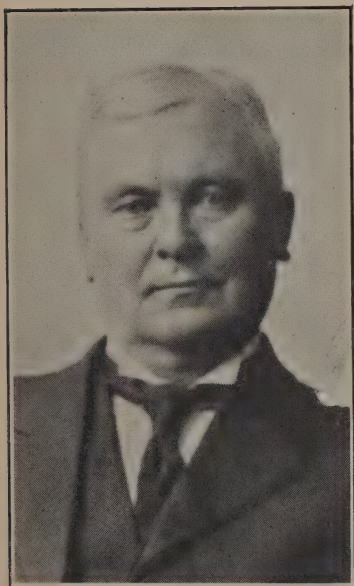
H. R. SCHWEINBERG,
SECRETARY.

*Still Serving.

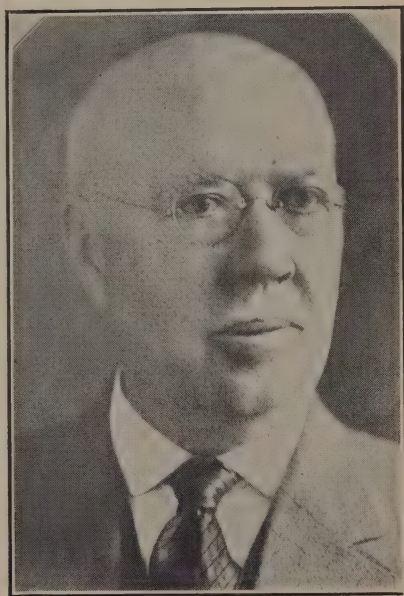


DR. ROBERT W. ALLISON, DECEASED
SCHOOL DIRECTOR, 1895-1926.

WILKINSBURG'S SUPERINTENDENTS
OF SCHOOLS—1887-1940



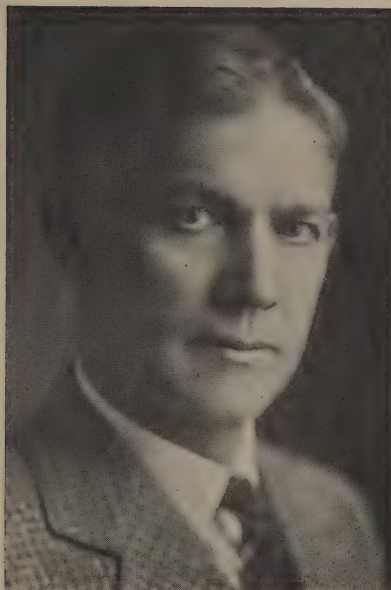
PROF. J. D. ANDERSON,
1877-1887-1902.



PROF. J. L. ALLISON,
1902-1922.



PROF. WM. MARTIN,
1922-1929.



PROF. WILLIAM C. GRAHAM,
1929-1940.*
PRESENT SUPT.

*Still Serving.

**H. J. Shives—1897 to ---

houses and apartments was in 1924 equal to the demand. This gain, however, did not affect the high rents.

Swissvale
Avenue
Widened

In 1921 Council decided to widen Swissvale Avenue to Glenn Avenue and Montier Street to Laketon Road. This was the outlet to Frankstown Road, and traffic was very heavy on it. Swissvale Avenue was so narrow that a wagon or automobile could not be passed by the street cars if left standing between the curb and the track. It was a splendid and much needed improvement. The entire end of town has been changed by this improvement; and the improvement is especially noticeable in the front yards.

Penn
Avenue

It is interesting to study the movements of people and merchants. That unseen directing force silently decrees that certain things shall be done, and they are done. No legal edicts, no recommendations of any groups of business men, but an instinct like that which causes people and birds to migrate. We attribute these movements to conditions, circumstances, ideas, and the like.

Great
Progress

The automobile sales agencies, service stations, and gasoline stations began to show a greater interest in Wilkinsburg. These seemed disposed to locate on Penn Avenue beginning at West Street. Business enterprises seemed headed for Penn Avenue, and quite a number of new buildings were erected, such as the freight station, Walmer's Hardware Building, Croneweith Building, the enlarged and remodeled First National Bank Building, and many other smaller buildings. Just west of the borough line a great improvement was taking

place. The old Thomas Carnegie grounds were broken up and sold off as small building lots. The district is known as Carnegie Manor. All along Penn Avenue stores, apartments and industries were established. On the eastern end of Penn Avenue great improvements were also taking place. The Duquesne Light Company established a large sub-station at the corner of Swissvale and Penn Avenues, and the widening of Swissvale Avenue made that end of town a much more desirable place of residence. A very great improvement was immediately noticeable, and many new homes were built. New business enterprises naturally sprang up in that end of town, and Penn Avenue became the main artery over which all the business flowed east and west. The establishing of our only hotel, the Penn-Lincoln, which is a community enterprise (the hotel opened June 1st, 1927) on this street gives additional importance to Penn Avenue as our "Main Street", and it would seem that after all these years Penn Avenue has come into her own. Her future development is now assured. Much of this progress and improvement is without doubt due to a new spirit which has gripped the Wilkinsburg people, and is the result of the World War when men learned to work together for a common purpose as never before.

Main
Street

There is in every growing town or community a spirit of extreme conservatism; a dislike for change; a desire to follow in the rut of good enough; a spirit which smacks of jealousy and envy which has been aptly termed "small town stuff". It is always found dragging at the skirts of progress. Wilkinsburg has

Growing
Pains

been troubled with more or less of this spirit. The World War did much to destroy this and give people a greater outlook on life. Since the war there has been organized here three splendid clubs whose purpose is the development of the group spirit and the advancement of the best interests of the entire community. This will blend into a finer sense of brotherhood, fellowship and patriotism. These are the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, and the Wilkinsburg Business Men's Association. To these clubs is largely due the success of the Penn-Lincoln Hotel project.

We are slowly but surely launching out into the depths of human experience, and realizing more and more that as the nation and world become smaller, and space and time are annihilated that our energies are not to be given alone to our own salvation, but rather that the problems of our fellowmen are truly our problems also. We are all part of one great family. This seems to be the new spirit which has come out of the war, and happily the people of Wilkinsburg have caught it.

— 1922 —

Prof. J. L.
Allison
Retires

Professor J. L. Allison retires as Superintendent of Schools. His successor is Professor W. H. Martin. Mr. Allison served for twenty years as superintendent. During his administration the number of scholars increased so rapidly that he had a building program on his hands almost continuously. Not only this, but school life was constantly changing, and the new conditions had to be met and pro-

vided for. He was not found wanting at any time, and when he retired he did so with the high esteem and affection of teachers and citizens.

— 1923-1924 —

Industrial conditions took a slump in 1924. The mills in the vicinity of Wilkinsburg ran on half time. The work of widening Swissvale Avenue was completed and accepted by Council June 14th, 1924.

The William Penn Highway was opened in 1924 eastward from the borough line for several miles.

William
Penn
Highway

It has been many years—1910—since Wilkinsburg citizens and church communicants were called to the meeting houses by the ringing of the church bells. The passing of the church bell, with other old customs, has brought a note of sadness to those of the old school, who take pride in classing themselves as a little old-fashioned. As the high or low pitched tones of those bells on the churches sent out their call across the hills to the people in days of old, calling them to prayer, they imparted a solemnity to the day that was different from these latter days. The ringing bells seemed to charge the air with a spiritual fervor that frowned upon any hilarity, and gave the day a peace and quietness that is strikingly absent from the Sunday of today. When the Mifflin Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church was rebuilt in 1924 and the chimes were added, not a little satisfaction was manifested on the part of those who have passed the half century milestone. It is the only church in town having chimes.

Chimes

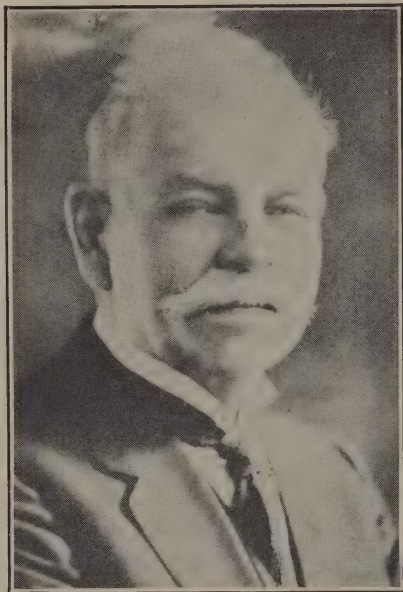
Mr. A. J. Walmer, prominent in church and business circles, died on January 27th, 1924. Mr. Walmer was for many years general foreman of the Union Swith and Signal Company, and a member and teacher in South Avenue Methodist Church. His sons operate the Chas. Walmer Hardware firm on Penn Avenue.

— 1925-1926 —

Penn
Lincoln
Hotel

During the many years of her existence, Wilkinsburg has never had hotel accommodations or anything that approached a hotel. Situated in prohibition territory the old, fallacious idea that a hotel would not pay unless liquor was sold discouraged everyone from building one. It was always possible to get first-class rooms or board, and we have usually had good restaurants. Shortly after national prohibition became effective, the late Judge A. W. Duff with others started a movement to build a hotel, but for some reason it was dropped. The matter was again resurrected in 1926 and Mr. A. K. King, President of the First National Bank, with other prominent citizens in connection with one of the hotel companies which operates a chain of hotels over the country, started a movement to sell the stock to the citizens of Wilkinsburg. After proper publicity had been given the matter, stock salesmen groups with captains districted the town, and the stock was subscribed in one week. The large modern brick hotel of ten stories is now completed, and a long felt need has been supplied. It is interesting to note that most of our clergymen

supported the movement, and some subscribed for the stock.



JACOB WEINEMAN,
COUNCILMAN, 1891-1915.

The death of Jacob Weineman occurred on June 12th, 1926. Mr. Weineman served as Councilman for a term of twenty-four years, and as School Director for two years. He was one of the early settlers, coming here in 1871. He entered the retail coal business and continued in that business for most of his life. At one time he was owner of the old Turn Pike and Toll Road eastward for some distance. The toll gate was located at Swissvale Avenue at the time he purchased the road, and Mr.

Jacob
Weineman
Dies

Weineman moved it to Penn Avenue and Coal Street, as shown in the artist's sketch of the old village. The pike road had gotten so bad, that Mr. Weineman's coal hauling was greatly slowed up.

Our town sustained a loss in the death of William Turner, Sr., who was a useful citizen as a school teacher, soldier and merchant. He was born in 1835, and died May 7th, 1926, at the age of 91. Mr. Turner reviewed and approved the artist's sketch of the village as shown herein.

Dr. Robert W. Allison died October 26, 1926. He served as School Director for a period of thirty years. It was said of him that he never sought any man's vote. He was also a director of the Wilkinsburg Bank.

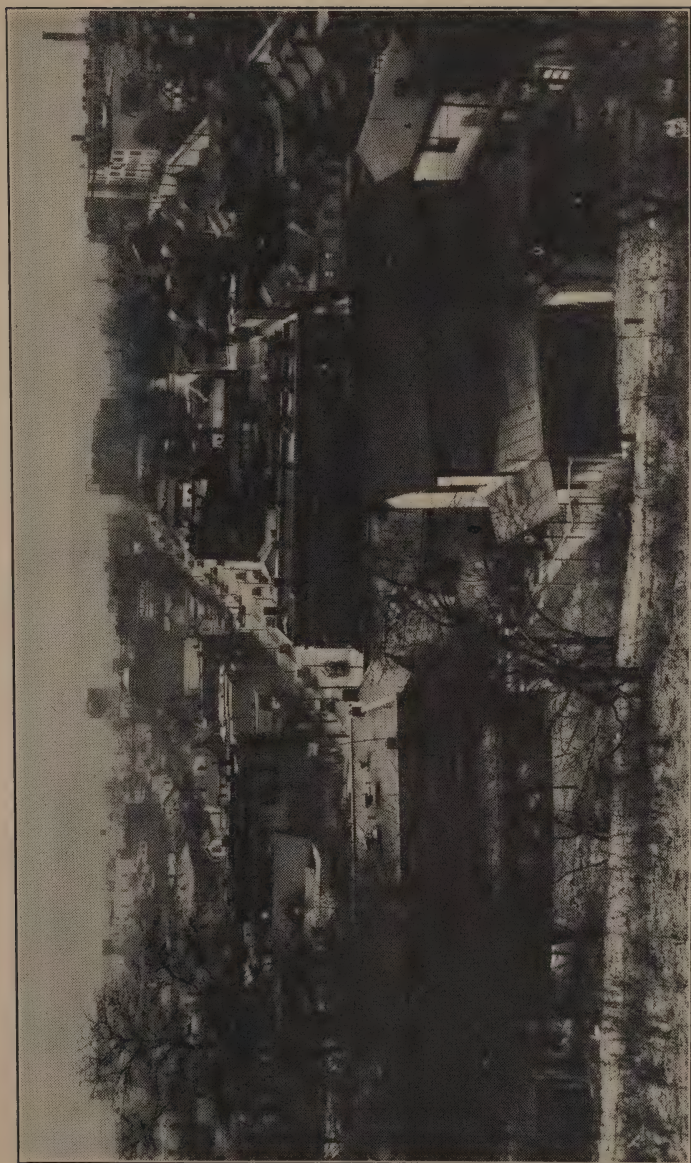
— 1927 —

The Penn-Lincoln Hotel opened for business on June 1st, 1927.

Survey

This new group or community spirit was manifested in the early part of 1927 by the Wilkinsburg Business Men's Association in making a survey of our traffic congestion and submitting to the Council plans for the widening of streets, rerouting, and making provision for the through traffic from the William Penn and Lincoln Highways and other improvements.

The community suffered a distinct loss in the death of Dr. Frank S. Pershing who died on September 20th, 1927. Dr. Pershing began practising in Wilkinsburg in 1880 before it was a borough and was a familiar figure on the streets of the Borough up to the time of his death.



WILKINSBURG, PA., IN 1927.

In this year the law passed by the last two sessions of the Legislature permitting the people of Allegheny County to vote on the so-called Metropolitan District Bill, which was designed for the purpose of enlarging the city of Pittsburgh to take in the entire county, was voted on and defeated. Once more Wilkinsburg is saved from the greedy clutches of the city politicians who have sought to ensnare us for three-quarters of a century in order to bolster her badly managed affairs. Our people have always been very suspicious of any overtures from the city government to become part of it.

Metro-
politan
Bill

Mr. Daniel A. Heck, well known in many homes in the Borough and always welcome because of his genial personality, died on May 6th, 1927, at the age of 90 years. He had taken up the agency of a line of hosiery and made his rounds regularly in order to employ his time at his advanced age. He was affectionately referred to as Father Heck.

— 1928 —

The David I. Rankin Post No. 234 Veterans of Foreign Wars Boys' Band was organized in 1928, with W. P. Yocum, manager, John Bennett, director. The band has prospered in numbers as well as in ability to render good music. In 1937 it took first prize in a State contest for Junior bands at Reading, Pa.

Rankin
Band

February 29th, 1928, the St. James Roman Catholic Church broke ground for a new church building on Franklin Avenue. It was dedicated August 10th, 1930. It is a splendid stone structure

Saint
James
Church

doing credit to the town and that denomination. It is unique in architecture, and it is charming, to hear the splendid chimes they have installed, playing some of the grand old hymns dear to the hearts of all Protestant church-going people. Its pastor is Reverend Stephen A. Walsh.

This year the American Legion started a movement known as "The Community Fire Works". The purpose was to provide entertainment for Young America, reduce injuries and unnecessary noise, and preserve whatever measure of patriotism is expressed in common fireworks and red fire. They are doing a good work, supported by contributions from the citizens.

American
Legion

On December 25th, 1928, the Borough lost a valuable and prominent citizen in the death of William Martin, Superintendent of Schools.

— 1929 —

On the night of October 21st, 1929, our people joined in a world-wide hook-up of the radio, to do honor and pay tribute to the greatest living American (in his line), Thomas A. Edison, Wizard of Menlo Park, who gave the world the electric bulb fifty years ago, 1879. It was stated on that occasion that no man, living or dead, in the history of the world had ever been paid such a tribute.

Thomas A.
Edison
Celebration

Henry Ford, Edison's old friend, had transported Edison's laboratory, building, machinery and many carloads of earth on which the building once stood, and re-erected them at Dearborn, Michigan, on the same earth. Here he had re-enacted the scene (with Edison's old helpers) of the night the first



KDKA BEGAN BROADCASTING HERE—
HOME OF DR. FRANK CONRAD, PENN. AVE.

electric bulb was tested. Owen Young was chairman. The speakers were President Hoover, Mr. Young, Mr. Edison, and one of his old helpers. Among those present were Henry Ford and Madam Curie, neither of whom would speak, merely rising to their feet.

Professor Einstein spoke direct from Germany (he has since become a citizen of U. S. A.). Messages were read from President Von Hindenburg of Germany, Admiral Richard Byrd from Little America at the South Pole, the Prince of Wales, and others. Edison with his bulb had lifted the world out of darkness into light.

The unseen radio audience was requested to turn their lights off and on at a given signal. Ford's "Old Time Orchestra" rendered music,—playing "When You and I Were Young, Maggie", "Dixie", "Old Folks at Home", and other favorites of Mr.

Edison. When Mr. Edison was asked to speak the "Wizard" was in tears and his voice in a high key, sounding like that of a very old man. He could not be understood.

We take note of it here, because such a tribute was only possible by reason of the radio; and because this is the town where KDKA began broadcasting; and also because our people participated in this unusual celebration.

Professor William C. Graham, former principal of the high school, was elected Superintendent of Schools on January 15th, 1929, succeeding William Martin, deceased. Both of these men belong to the group of older citizens of the Borough, having lived here for many years.

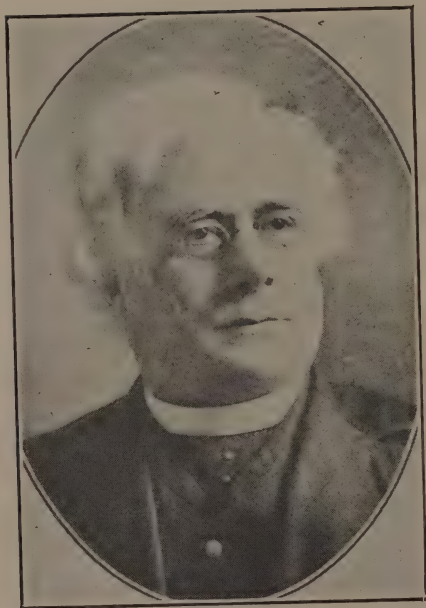
The Lovejoy Mansion, erected by F. T. F. Lovejoy, just across the line near Frick Park, came into the possession of William E. Hamnett. It was later sold to Rose Ruben, and then torn down about April of this year, 1929. (See pages 138 and 139). Had this mansion been finished according to plans and specifications, it would have been the most outstanding mansion west of the Alleghenies, in this State.

— 1930 —

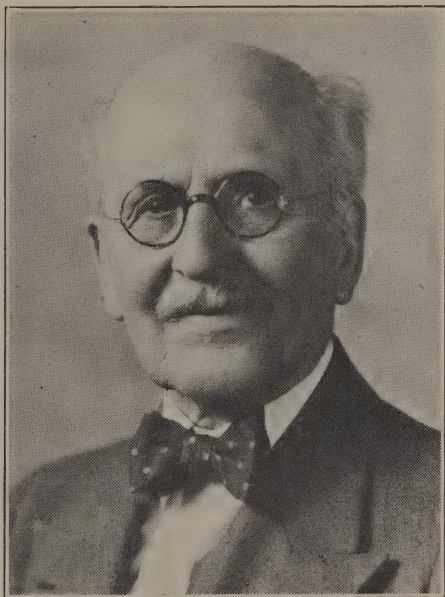
This was a tragic year in many respects. From early Spring, a noticeable falling off of sales in all lines was experienced; reports of many industries laying off men were common; and stocks reached an all time low by November, 1930.

For a number of years the chain stores were a

THE FOLLOWING NAMED CITIZENS MEANT
MUCH TO WILKINSBURG

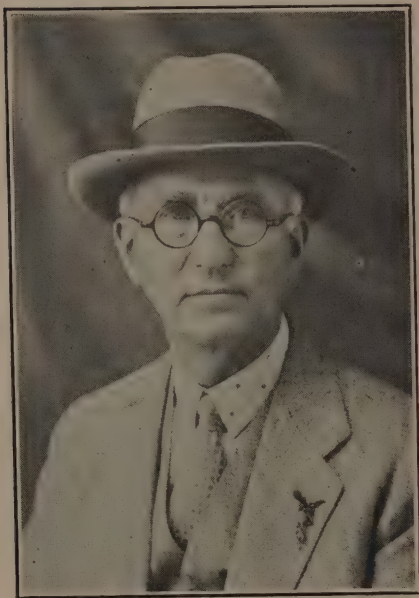


REV. A. A. LAMBING, L.L.D., DECEASED,
ST. JAMES R. C. CHURCH.



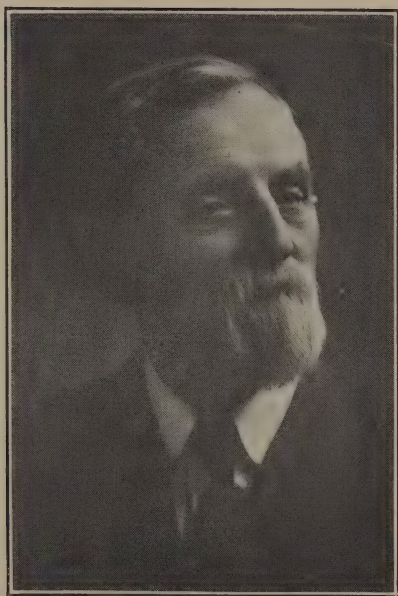
MICHAEL BUCK, M.D.*

*Still living.



*JOSEPH CALDWELL—
CALDWELL & GRAHAM—1889.

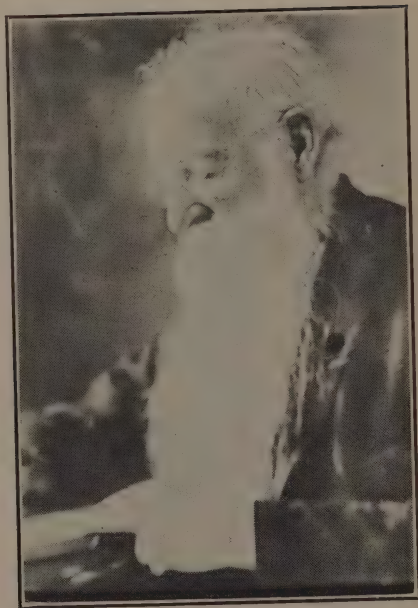
*Still living.



JOSIAH STRICKLER, DECEASED—
FOUNDER WILKINSBURG BANK.



*VERNON R. COVELL,
SUPT. SOUTH AVE. METHODIST
S. S. FOR 40 YEARS.



DANIEL A. HECK, DECEASED—
FATHER HECK.



WILLIAM B. McKECHNIE

Chain
Stores

source of grief to the small merchant, being able to undersell him owing to their greater purchasing power. This advantage resulted in driving many of the smaller merchants out of business. Demands were made by those who managed to survive, that legislation be passed taxing these chain stores on sales. This was done in this State, which resulted in consolidations of some of the chains; and again more people were thrown out of employment. The law was afterwards declared unconstitutional.

Food prices took a great drop, which was helpful to those depending on relief or part-time employment.

Organized
Relief

The industrial conditions grew steadily worse and a hard winter was predicted. A great relief organization was launched all over the nation in September. Our organization did splendid and effective work taking care of all our needy, nicely. A director, Mr. Speer, at \$100.00 per month, supervised the work.

Building
Off

Building fell off badly this year, throwing a large number of tradesmen out of employment, and adding to the ranks of the increasing army of unemployed. The reports of bank failures in nearby towns and villages began to multiply; some of them were of a tragic nature. In an effort to stem the tide of failures, the Government used pressure to compel the stronger to save the weaker by merging in order to hold public confidence. This only postponed the final crash, when all went down, as was the case in Uniontown, Pa., leaving the town without banking facilities. In Connellsville, Pa., only

Bank
Failures

twelve miles from the former town, four banks crashed, leaving only one.

Harsh criticism was heard of the banks on every hand, much of it undeserved. For some years there had been unrestricted gambling in stocks. The price of these sky-rocketed. Banks in general loaned much money taking the stocks as colateral. When the decline in price began, banks called for additional cash or security. A vast army of these individuals being either out of employment or on part-time, with confidence blasted, could not or would not meet the demand of the banks and they had nothing to do but sell at the depressed price. These losses had to be met from their reserves, which soon were below the requirement; the next step was inevitable,—Crash.

Stock
Crash

It should be remembered that most of these loans were safe when prices were high; the margin of loan was safe; the loan was made in good faith. Banks exist for the purpose of loaning money; they cannot pay interest on deposits, nor render the many other services, unless they do make loans.

Banks

A great many robberies took place during the latter part of this year. Many homes were broken into, and many thousands of dollars worth of goods stolen, both in our Borough and to a greater extent in the city.

Robbery

This year St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Reverend William Porkess, D.D., Rector, erected a splendid three story stone Parish House facing Pitt Street and Rebecca Avenue, also a Rectory adjoining the church, facing on Franklin Avenue; made

possible by the generous gift of Mr. A. L. Humphries.



REV. WILLIAM PORKESS, D.D.

Saint
James
Catholic
Church

St. James Roman Catholic Church dedicated its beautiful new stone structure August 10th, 1930. Its carillon can be heard over most of the town. Some of the hymns dear to the heart of all churches can be heard on Sabbath morning. Its pastor, as previously stated, is the Reverend Father Stephen A. Walsh.

Poor
Holiday
Season

Throughout the year the clouds of adversity hung very low over our town and city. Merchant, manufacturer and home failed to see the silver lining and when December arrived the holiday spirit was at a low ebb. There was very little decorating of homes or stores. In the city only two department stores, Horne's and Kaufmann's, were decorated.

— 1931 —

The year of 1931 opened with many thousands out of work. Business conditions were very bad. President Hoover appealed to employers not to cut wages. They did not. Multiplying signs indicated a world panic. No one in either political party offered a solution; neither did the economists. Overproduction — under-consumption — World War — speculation and many others were named as causes, but there were no sensible solutions.

Cause of
Panic

This year families began to double up. Children out of work came home; married couples separated, each going to his or her respective home until conditions got better. Rents were reduced very greatly. There were more houses and apartments vacant than there had been in fifteen years. A vast number of renters were unable to pay their rent, and became in arrears by reason of unemployment. There was no use moving elsewhere as they could not be released; besides they could not rent another house unless the rent was paid in advance and the applicant employed. Food prices were lower; prices of shoes and clothing did not change much.

Vacant
Houses

Robert L. Finley, president of the Wilkinsburg Bank, died February 17th, 1931. His service with the bank dated back to the days of Josiah Strickler, the founder of the bank. Mr. Finley belonged to the conservative group of citizens.

This year our movies and also the spoken drama showed increasing signs of vulgarity and obscenity. Matters that were considered private, pure and sacred, were being dragged into the open, as well as

Movies

into the gutter. Marriage and family life became the butt of the crudest jokes. The screen began to make heroes and heroines out of gangsters, drunks, thieves, and prostitutes in the pictures they placed before the public. This disregard for public morals and its effect upon our youth will be referred to later.

Wages
Reduced

Big business began a still greater reduction in wages. Most all lines of business, small and great, their forces and also a ten percent reduction in did likewise, except the railroads. This, of course, affected us; the vast majority of our people working in mills, factories and offices.

Unemployed
Six Millions

Unemployment in the nation is estimated at six millions in the daily press. Prices of stocks continue on their downward course; dividends are reduced.

Banks
Close

Banks continued to fail. The Monongahela National Bank, in the city, and the Homewood National Bank both closed. Anxiety, discontent and fear grew among our people.

Abundant
Crops

As the summer advanced, it became evident that we would have a bumper crop of everything. Fruit, grain and garden truck were in abundance, but there was no money to buy. Everyone who had a garden or fruit trees had more than they could use and could not sell, and they gave their surplus away. Thousands of bushels of fruit and garden truck went to waste.

H. J. Heinz
Company

The County and State authorities did their best to preserve this great surplus by organizing canning societies. H. J. Heinz Company and other manufacturers, and merchants of like kind, donated jars,

cans and experts to direct in order to save the surplus crops. Much was saved, but there was a great loss notwithstanding this effort.

This year, 1931, Mr. Frank C. Biddle, became Director of Music at the High School. Mr. Biddle organized the A Capella Choir. This organization became very popular with the young folks as well as the older citizens. This is not the only music organization in the school; our school authorities have not been unmindful of the effect of music on the lives of the young, and maintain two other organizations in the schools of which our citizens are likewise proud,—the High School Orchestra and the Band. These need only to be heard to be appreciated.

Biddle

A Capella
Choir

Mr. Biddle resigned in 1936, and Mr. Robert O. Barkley became Director of Music. Mr. Barkley has proven a worthy successor to Mr. Biddle, having enlarged his choir and taken it into churches and other institutions, where they have had a splendid reception. He has also succeeded Mr. Biddle as Director of Music in South Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church and takes part in other social and public events.

Barkley

Owing to the unusual conditions through which we are passing this year, it would seem proper that we refer to living costs at this point. Fancy apples, 50 cents per bushel; potatoes, 50 to 60 cents per bushel; butter, 30 cents per pound; eggs, 30 cents per dozen; coffee, 15 to 30 cents per pound, and bread 7 to 9 cents per loaf. Clothing, men's suits, fair to good quality, \$20.00 to \$35.00; overcoats,

Food
Prices

the same. Hats, \$2.50 to \$6.00; shoes, \$4.00 to \$7.00.

Wages

Wages remained high for skilled workmen. Plumbers, \$8.00 to \$10.00 per day; carpenters, \$12.00 per day; brick-layers, \$12.00 to \$14.00 per day; plasterers, \$12.00 to \$14.00 per day.

Relief

In 1930 our Relief Association carried our people through the winter very satisfactorily, except for some little criticism of a paid clerk or manager, which had cost \$100.00 per month. This year (1931) the women of the Borough felt this could be saved, and volunteered to take turns in keeping the Agency open at certain hours of the day. This proved satisfactory; over \$3,000.00 was raised for relief.

Corrupt
Politics

County and city politics became very corrupt, resulting in scandals involving Mayor Charles Kline and other city and county officials. The Republican machine had become so corrupt it was literally falling to pieces. Party lines were smashed. The election resulted in smashing the corrupt machine, electing new County Commissioners McGovern and Barr, unseating E. V. Babcock and Joseph Armstrong. When the machine was beaten, an effort was made to count their candidates as elected by changing tally sheets. They were caught, which resulted in one hundred or more ballot boxes being opened and recounted, and resulted in about one hundred persons being indicted by Grand Jury.

Later, Mayor Kline and City Treasurer Roy Schooley were indicted, tried and convicted. Kline resigned from office a very sick man, and died in July, 1933. Schooley died the following year.

The Chamber of Commerce and various Boards of Trades joined and were of great service in defeating the old ring. The Kline and Armstrong administrations were probably the worst in the history of the city of Pittsburgh. Wilkinsburg has always been free from political scandals. We could hardly claim to be Simon pure in this respect but, in the main, our affairs have been honestly and efficiently administered by the City Fathers.

Politics

The reader may ask, "Why this reference to the Pittsburgh and county cesspool of iniquity and impurity? What has it to do with the history of Wilkinsburg?" It has much to do. What affects either county or city affects us. They set the pace in social, religious, and civic life. The great conventions and gatherings take place in the city, and out from these go the ideas and ideals that dominate the life of the whole western end of the State. We have always battled against the pressure from the city. It has pushed its saloons, cabarets, night life and Continental Sabbath to our very doors, and once into our midst to our shame, until we revolted, and drove them out. We mention these conditions here, because we must come back later to account for certain situations and conditions forced upon us, which were contrary to our standards.

City
Pressure

— 1932 —

Business conditions showed no improvement as the year opened, aside from the holiday season. Even weather conditions were against the merchants. Cold weather set in early, October 1st, 1931, yet it was not severe, very rarely reaching the

Season
Change

freezing point up to the last of January. There was hardly any snow. This was fortunate for the poor and jobless, but hard on the merchants.

Wages
Reduced

The panic is world-wide. Europe is in worse condition than United States. Wages are being reduced in stores and offices from ten to thirty percent. Unemployment is increasing.

Banks
Closed

This panic is said to be the greatest and most disastrous in the history of the world. Over two thousand banks in our country have closed. Twenty banks closed in Pittsburgh district during November, 1932. Wheat has dropped to 35 cents per bushel; all other living costs have dropped.

Prices
Down

Central
Bank
Absorbed

Central National Bank was taken over this year by the First National Bank of Wilkinsburg; no loss to depositors.

Dividends

Steel mills dropped to thirty percent capacity; coke business completely closed down. Dividends on stocks almost ceased.

Railroad
Distress

Railroads suffered badly; forces were curtailed to bare necessity. They appealed to the Government for help. A large portion of our people being railroad employees, this reduction in the force added to the relief burden.

Death of
Armstrong

This year witnessed the death of Joseph Armstrong, former commissioner of Allegheny County.

Relief
Associa-
tions

Our local Relief Association functioned well during this year and was able to take care of our needy. This same kind of work was performed all over the nation in towns and cities. It was all voluntary up to this time. These associations probably saved us from bread riots and their consequences.

Unemployment increased in the nation to 14,000,000 and our Borough had its share. This condition began to effect the churches, large and small. The members could not pay their dues. The ministers agreed to a cut in salary of ten or fifteen per cent.

Clergymen's
Salaries
Cut

Those industries and offices still operating began to "stagger" their payrolls to spread the work over the organization in order to hold it together, hoping for a better day. Many firms folded up and disappeared. Men with as much as thirty years' service lost their positions and were too old to secure one when recovery would come.

Payrolls
Staggered

The so-called middle classes, or white-collared men's suffering began to be acute. Because of this a cry began to be heard for pensions for the aged. This resulted in many inexperienced men (never economists) who knew nothing of finance, launching organizations and schemes to relieve this aged group and remove them from the great army of unemployed. Naturally, they drew to their ranks a vast army of those seeking a way out of their dilemma, so that Washington was forced to take notice, also Harrisburg.

Pension
Schemes

The Parent Teachers Association was organized this year. Its purpose is to bring the home and school closer and promote laws and conditions for the protection of the child, raise the standards of home life and community. This organization is capable of transforming the whole community life if parents could be induced to attend its meetings and co-operate with it in its aims.

Parent-
Teacher
Assn.

Chamber
Commerce

The former Wilkinsburg Business Men's Association dissolved into the Chamber of Commerce this year, May, 1932. The old organization did good work but felt that it could do better under the latter name, which gave more dignity and clarity to the purpose for which this splendid organization exists. Its committees are formed from their best men; because of their close watch on the Borough's life and affairs it enables them to speak with power.

Techno-
cracy

Toward the close of this year, the whole nation was startled by a published report of a group of economists, headed by Drs. Howard Scott, Steinmetz, Veblen and Ackerman, who got together in Columbia University, New York, looked over the condition of our nation as well as the other nations of the world, and determined that within eighteen months, from November, 1932, we and all other nations of the world would tumble into the abyss, and all economic order would cease.

Their findings were based on the records of displacing man power with machinery. The report stated that in the past 150 years, inventions of labor-saving devices had been more than is recorded in all previous written history. It was pointed out how factories and great steel mills, road building machines, automobiles, had displaced thousands and would increasingly do so as the months and years rolled on.

There was to be a great upheaval among the nations across the sea. England was to be shorn of her colonies and driven back to her little island. Her sea power was to be destroyed. France and

Germany were likewise to be shaken, and the Sleeping Giant in the backward nations, such as China and India, would arise, shake off those nations which were exploiting them, and adopt the western ways of life, inventions and conveniences for their people, and live their own life. The ministers of New York City and other cities and towns, including our own, as well as Clubs, discussed this report. Papers and magazines gave columns and pages to it.

That these men saw a gathering world-shaking storm hardly anyone can deny, who reflects on the number of our unemployed, the upheaval in our economic, social, religious and political life, as well as in all the other nations of the earth. Their time limit only seemed to be wrong.

Reverend Thomas D. Edgar, pastor of the Second United Presbyterian Church for the past twenty-seven years, met death as the result of being struck by a fast passenger train at the Edgewood Station on February 24th, 1932. His was a well-known figure, seen in most public gatherings, and his death was mourned by a large circle of friends.

Death of
Rev. T. D.
Edgar

— 1933 —

Conditions grew worse as this year opened. United States Steel common stock, the premier stock, going to a new low of 30, a drop from over 200. Rents were the lowest in twenty years. Food prices were also at a new low.

Foods and
Rents

Governor Gifford Pinchot declared a Bank Moratorium for all State banks for March 4th and 6th,

Bank
Moratorium

1933, closing them for two days. Newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt followed suit and declared March 6th to 9th, inclusive, as a moratorium for the banks.

Scrip
Again

Some banks printed scrip to be used for money as in 1907, but at the last moment, the Government refused to allow it to be used. The Government organized the Reconstruction Finance Corporation which gave great assistance to railroads and banks.

Unemployed

The unemployed had now reached 16,000,000. Such an army grew dangerous and threatening. Washington was again forced to act quickly and the Federal Government organized a nation-wide relief. This, without doubt, saved the nation from bread riots or revolution.

Federal
Relief

Sometime during 1933 Council added a radio car to the Police Department. Arrangements were made with the Pittsburgh Police Department to tie our service in with theirs so that greater efficiency resulted. A telephone call for police under this system enabled the Sergeant to talk to our local radio car anywhere in town, and the police could be on hand where needed in a few minutes.

18th
Amendment
Repealed

In February of this year, the Democrats, true to their platform and campaign promises, passed an amendment to the Constitution, repealing the Eighteenth Amendment, and our people were greatly distressed. This act was (according to the liquor sympathizers) to restore prosperity, and put a chicken in every dinner pail. What it did to our Borough will be seen in a later reference.

First Natl.
Bank Closed

The First National Bank failed to open for business at the end of the Moratorium. A conservator

was appointed. Later it was arranged for the bank to receive accounts marked "Trust Fund", which could be checked out; but old accounts were frozen, and could not be used.

When the moratorium expired, the press reported that about thirty percent of the banks of the nation had failed to open. As a result of these failures, a cry went up all over the nation that the Government do something to protect the innocent depositor who placed his money in these banks with no protection if they failed. It was no comfort or satisfaction to remind the depositor that this was his own risk. He had no way of knowing a safe bank from an unsafe one. It was pointed out that these failures had been going on since the banking system was founded. The Government responded by creating the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation which insures each depositor in full up to \$5000.00, permitting, but not compelling, all banks to become members. It is one of the best laws on the Nation's statute books.

30% of
Nation's
Banks Fail

Insuring
Depositors

Beer and liquor is now sold in Wilkinsburg, the first since 1872. Our people are very unhappy about it. This condition is not of their choosing, but forced upon us. Fortunately, the law provides a local option feature, permitting it to be voted out.

Beer and
Liquor

This year we are confronted with the open theatre on Sunday, presumably for Sweet Charity's sake, giving part of the proceeds to the widows and orphans of Foreign War Veterans. The churches protested to Burgess William Turner who refused to close them.

Sunday
Movies

It is interesting to note how some institutions get interested in Sweet Charity, when they desire to smash some old, valuable custom or law. How they lose interest in Sweet Charity as soon as they appear to have accomplished their main purpose, which is usually of a financial character.

Burgess
Yocum

Mayor
McNair

William Yocum was elected Burgess of Wilkinsburg this year. In Pittsburgh they elected William N. McNair mayor (by accident) by reason of the great Democratic landslide. McNair seemed to have no conception of the dignity of office, or the responsibility attached to it. The city papers dubbed most of his doing as "clowning". He was finally forced to resign after about one year or more, during which time Pittsburgh's Mayor became the butt of jokes, and a subject for the cartoonist.

Sit-Down
Strikes

Strikes, strikes everywhere. Great strikes in the steel mills and coal mines. Something new in strikes called "Sit Down Strikes", when the workmen take charge of factories, stop work, and refuse to allow the factory to operate, while they hold possession of it. This type was copied from France. Millions out of work, yet the organizations ordered strikes in some cases, while in others the men struck against the advise of their officers, and refused to obey them. The government finally interfered. The Federal Government created the National Recovery Act in an attempt to control hours of labor, wages and prices. It smelled of Fascism. Employers fought it bitterly. Finally the Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional.

N. R. A.

Old-timers and church people in general bowed

their heads in sorrow and shame as they made their way through the streets of the town once dubbed "The Holy City", for now it might be justly dubbed "Sodom and Gomorrah" if one were to judge from what could be seen and heard in a town once noted for its churches, its piety and its loyalty to the highest standards of living. Evil days had surely fallen upon our much beloved community, and not because of our own choosing. A group of men (of strange tongue), akin to vultures, descended on our town and rented, leased or purchased every piece of property available, and opened up under the guise of restaurants, gardens, and other fancy titles, places to beguile the innocent to enter their portals, which were in the main liquor and beer drinking joints.

Wine,
Women
and Song

The Democratic Party being in full control in city and State passed another law at Harrisburg liberalizing the Sabbath Day, permitting baseball, concerts, movies and football, which resulted in bringing a large number of out-of-town visitors, who came to spend the evening because of the novelty of doing so in a second Coney Island. The lid was off; restraint was cast to the winds. Even the little restraint contained in the law was disregarded and broken, just as it always had been with this type of business.

New Deal
Action

The screen and vaudeville became obscene and vulgar. It was risky to allow children to go to the movies. The First Lady of the Land was quoted as saying, "Young girls must learn to drink". So, this was the first fruits of the NEW DEAL. We will return to this subject later.

Wilkinsburg
Gazette

Once more our local paper changed its name. The Wilkinsburg Progress, which had been published by Mr. Clark Kelly and Congressman M. Clyde Kelly, whose editor was John McDowell, was purchased by Mr. McDowell this year, and the name changed to "Wilkinsburg Gazette"; a more dignified and comprehensive name for the type of paper it was meant to be.



CHARLES W. KEARNS,
COUNCILMAN—1914-1926.

Knights
Malta
Convention

The State Convention of the Grand Commandery Knights of Malta was held May 9th, 10th and 11th, 1933. Choosing Wilkinsburg for its State Convention was largely due to the work of John G. Miles

and Charles W. Kearns of our Borough. The splendid success of the convention here was also largely due to the tireless work of these two outstanding citizens.

The First National Bank at Wilkinsburg opened its doors for business on November 15, 1933, being the successor to The First National Bank of Wilkinsburg. The officers are L. P. Noble, president; L. E. Huseman, cashier; C. G. McKee, assistant cashier. It was decided to liquidate the affairs of the older institution.

New
Bank

As the year drew to a close, death took three of our prominent citizens, two former Burgesses, John

Death
Takes Two
Burgesses



EX-BURGESS JESSE R. LANGLEY.

Langley's
Administra-
tion

G. Miles and Jesse R. Langley. Joseph Bickart, one of the earlier merchants (jewelry) died in November. Mr. Miles served two terms as Burgess, Mr. Langley one term. Mr. Langley did more to interpret the spirit, ideals and traditions of our Borough than any other, not excepting Burgess Keys. His administration was stormy, as is always the case, when an officer takes his oath of office seriously, and demands respect for law. This was quite noticeable in visiting his court room sessions.

— 1934 —

Unemploy-
ment

Unemployment remained at 16,000,000. Heavy industry lags. Here and there is temporary improvement, but it does not last.

Mr. George Rankin, Jr., former cashier of the Central National Bank, was nominated and elected on the Democratic ticket as State Senator this year 1934, for the term of four years.

Up to this year Mr. Rankin had been listed as a Republican, though Independent, as was Congressman M. Clyde Kelly.

Boys' Club

The Boys' Club was organized this year through the efforts of a Mr. McInerny, R. H. Fornof, Ted Stephens, H. C. Davis, W. P. Yocum and Reverend O. L. Ice. This was a timely and much desired service to the boys in directing their young lives into useful and constructive channels.

Historical
Assn.

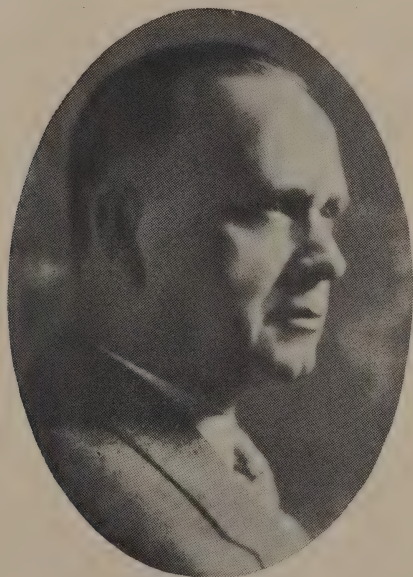
The Group for Historical Research of Wilkinsburg Village and Environs was organized June, 1934. Its officers are S. H. Jackson, president, and C. M. Carothers, secretary and treasurer. Such an

organization could perform valuable service to the community in research work and preserving records for future generations.

Dr. F. R. Stotler died April 28th, 1934. He had served for twenty-eight years as School Director, and for forty-five years as physician to the Home for the Aged at Rebecca and Swisssvale Avenues.

Death of
Dr. F. R.
Stotler

Business took a little spurt and the steel business (our barometer) moved up to about 50 percent. Prices in general moved up a bit; rents also moved up a little. Building remained at a standstill.



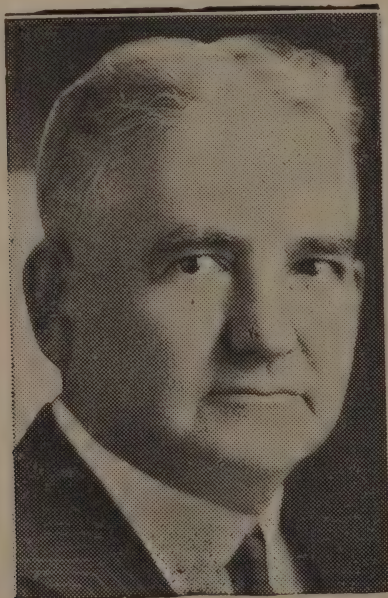
GEORGE RANKIN, JR.

State Senator George Rankin, Jr., of our Borough, who had served one term in the Senate, was nominated by the Democratic Party for County Commis-

George
Rankin, Jr.

sioner, and elected. Mr. Rankin had for many years been known as a Republican, but claimed to be Independent. He had always supported M. Clyde Kelly in his battles with the Republican machine. He, with legions of other Republicans, viewed with dismay the growing corruption and practice of re-electing the same old Party standbys to office, by shunting them from one office to another. Thus the evil practices and policies of the old machine were kept alive in the face of powerful editorials in both city and our own local paper. It finally struck with devastating force, landing George H. Earle, Democrat, in the Governorship, and William N. McNair,

Political
Storm



WILLIAM TURNER, BURGESS—
PITTSBURGH PAST MASTER—COUNTY TREASURER.

Democrat (by accident) as Mayor of Pittsburgh. William Turner, Democrat, of our Borough, was elected as Treasurer of Allegheny County, in this great political upheaval.

William
Turner

This political upheaval seems to indicate that party name does not put a halo about any man's head. It also indicates that the voters no longer worship at a Party throne; they demand honesty, efficiency and decency in civil affairs, regardless of Party. It will be noted later in this work how the wrath of the voters works both ways.

Political
Straws

Relief now changes and its recipients work mostly on roads and such other kind of work the Federal and State Governments may direct. It now becomes the Works Progress Administration; the amount paid to each family is about \$15.00 per week. It will be in harmony with this work to make reference at this time to the much criticised W. P. A., which organization became the butt of jokes on screen, stage and curb. That much of it was deserved, we would not deny. In justice to its founders, it must be pointed out that a great crisis was upon us—not the fault of any one administration, but of several. Our whole economic life was overturned. Millions, unemployed; banks, closed; savings, gone; the hungry and homeless were in a dangerous frame of mind. Men were already on the march to Washington, before President Hoover left the White House (Father Cox's March).

W.P.A.
Created

Men on
the March

Such an army or mob is a great danger to any monarchy or democracy. President Roosevelt secured authority from Congress to meet this emergency. There was no set-up or organization in

existence, so one had to be quickly created. In any emergency, when an organization is hastily put together to handle a critical situation, its blunders are legion. It could not be different with this one. No sane person will deny that there was, and is corruption and immense waste.

Slimy Hand
of Politics

No federal or state organization of such gigantic proportions could hope to escape the slimy hand of politics. Both parties pay their political debts with jobs to their relatives and hirelings, as well as legislation favoring their financial backers. All, however, is not evil. The nation has benefited in forest, fields and roads, as well as in many improvements of various kinds in villages and towns, our own not excepted.

Not All
Waste

Old Age
Pensions

In our town, as well as in the entire nation, there has been an increasing number of men and women who have lost their positions for one reason or another, and especially since 1930. In an effort to find other positions they have been turned away with the remark "too old". This experience created deep discontent, and, in some cases, despair. As a result, a great cry has gone up all over the nation for Old Age Pensions. Organizations under various names sprang up in various parts of the country, and in some parts they became a power by reason of their increasing membership. Washington was forced to take notice as was our own State.

Townsend
Plan

Perhaps the Townsend Plan is the most outstanding and rapid growing one of this type, and we have such in our midst. They demand that each person over the age of 60 be paid \$200.00 per

month, to be spent each month and not saved. Thus, we spend ourselves back to prosperity. No economist of any reputation endorses such a plan. These schemes or plans usually originate with some impractical dreamer.

Since the World War, 1914-1918, a noticeable change appeared in the attitude of the people toward the church and religion. There appeared to be a sort of intellectual and religious emancipation. This is more apparent since 1930. The so-called Modernist preacher began by questioning certain well established beliefs and customs concerning the church and its mission. A growing irreverence for the church building and pulpit is increasing. Certain churches in the city became so liberal that smokers, card parties, and dances were reported to be held in the basements of the church buildings. The so-called puritanic laws and customs of the early fathers were ridiculed and made the butt of jokes. The teaching (which has bedeviled our nation for so many years) that children and youth be allowed to live their own lives, in their own way, was bearing abundant fruit.

Main Street
in Religion

Restraint
Taboo

The defense which these ministers offered was, "We must do something to hold our young folks in the church". So the churches began to cater to the demands of inexperienced youth. The Pearl of Great Price had apparently been moved away from the spiritual to the physical by some of our religious leaders.

School teachers may not punish pupils for disobedience; the home has broken down and lost its authority. The church has suffered badly. The

evening service has been abandoned in some churches, also the Wednesday night Prayer Service. One of our churches gave breakfast to men who would come out to Bible Class in order to stimulate attendance. This was later abandoned. Most churches have dining room facilities. Most of the societies within the church must serve diners or suppers in connection with their meetings to secure attendance.

Sunday

Sunday has become a holiday, no longer a holy day. Baseball, football and sports of all kinds. The day is commercialized almost as much as any other day. Many stores are open (except the larger ones), houses are painted, repairs made, trucks haul great loads here and there. The authorities pay no attention to any of these violations.

Social Life

Social life has suffered greatly by reason of this personal liberty craze. A boldness and daring seized both sexes. The most delicate subjects were unhesitatingly discussed. For many years, woman has regarded smoking and drinking as being indicative of being abreast of the times. Both young and old women smoke openly in public places and in the homes. About the only places of public character where smoking is forbidden are a Pullman car, a church auditorium, or the lecture and music halls.

Liquor

The use of intoxicating liquor, too, is considered quite smart by the young ladies, before and since the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Barmaids may also be found in most all of our drinking places, disguised as restaurants.

Dress has undergone great changes. From the long trailing three and four skirts of the 80's, to the one, perhaps two, piece skirt of knee length, is indeed a far cry. The former was the slow out-growth from the Middle Ages, and before, when both face and form were hidden by veil and cloak from public gaze. The latter has become a back-to-nature craze; wear as little as the law permits. Some of the so-called "well-to-do" families have their "coming-out" parties for their daughters at the watering places, such as Atlantic City and Florida, at which time they come out in one-piece bathing suits of twelve inches in length with ornamental breast-plates. Hollywood, the annual American Bathing Beauty show,—our educational center,—the religious leaders and the cosmetic industry, are probably to blame for much of this. What Nature failed to do for milady, the beauty parlor now does, for she paints her nails, her cheeks and her lips, dyes her hair, and so history repeats itself; for so did the Shawnees, Delawares and Senacas, who were natives of these parts.

Dress

Style
Custom

The Nudist craze struck our community this year, and a group of morons attempted to rent a farm east of the town for a colony, but failed. At the close of 1939 traces of this craze were still with us. Parents dressed or undressed their small children to the extent that they roved through the streets almost nude. Fully developed young girls appeared in abbreviated bathing suits, riding bicycles. The parents apparently gave no thought as to what effect such exhibitions would have on the morals of the youth in later years. They sought

Nudists

Children's
Dress

to have their daughters admired, forgetting that modesty is one of the greatest of virtues, and that it thrives only by practice. This fad of scantily dressed children was carried on into the winter, except that the upper part of the child was clothed warmly, while the limbs were bare in the coldest weather.

Men's
Hats

Men began to go about the streets without hats. This fad did not become general. Some did so winter and summer. Some of the medical fraternity denounced this, warning against doing so in winter especially for fear of sinus trouble.

Dogs

Dogs came into their own about 1930. It was a poor family that could not afford one at least. They took the place of the child in childless homes, and in some other homes, seemed to receive more care than the children. The best rooms and furniture were none too good for them, and so it remains in 1939. Dog hospitals, caterers, physicians and dentists came into existence. In the beginning street cars, buses and trains ruled against them, but later modified their rules. They occupy front seats in the automobiles, and usually the laps of their female owners at society events. These dogs range in size from two pounds to one hundred pounds. These pets must have their daily exercise. It is no little source of amusement to see one of these little midgets or monsters making his or her way along the streets or parks on the end of a leash held by Madame or her husband, who frequently happens to be the head of some great industry, bank or other institution. Dogs will be dogs, but their owners never seem embarrassed by their curious habits.

One writer dubbed the 1930's as "the silly age".

In the preceding few pages, we have digressed from statistical matter and attempted to picture the effect of certain national and state movements, fads and fancies, have had upon our people; all of which seems to us is in perfect harmony with this work. (See preface.) We are not isolated from the outside world as we were in the early days. Our transportation and communication facilities place us in touch with the whole world in these distressing times. We pause here for this comment lest the reader think we have introduced matter that has no place in the life of our people.

— 1935 —

Ex-Congressman M. Clyde Kelly died on April 29th, 1935, as a result of an accident while out hunting frogs. The gun was discharged in some manner, the bullet striking Mr. Kelly, wounding him so badly that he died a few hours later. He was not a citizen of our Borough, but was greatly admired here for his independence, ability and loyalty. He was always accessible to his constituents, regardless of race, creed or color, and did his best for them. His service covered a period of twenty years. He was defeated in the Democratic landslide in 1934 by James Quinn.

M. Clyde
Kelly's
Death

The year of 1935 will probably be remembered as one of the most eventful and critical in the history of the Borough.

Eventful
Year

Our village had been made Dry territory through the efforts of James Kelly in 1871 by having a law put on the statute books prohibiting the sale of

liquor, or granting of license by the courts in this and adjacent territory.



GEO. WESTINGHOUSE BRIDGE—EAST PITTSBURGH.

Liquor
Returns

In 1933 the Democratic Party came into power and proceeded to redeem one of its pledges, to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment, which they did, with the result that it nullified the law governing our Borough. This done, a pack of men of strange name and tongue settled down in our Borough like a plague and opened up their drinking joints (referred to in preceding pages) until our peace-loving, church-going and orderly community became a "Coney Island". The law (fortunately for us) contained a local option provision, permitting the citizens to vote it out if they desired. They did desire to do so and a battle was begun and waged between the church people and the commercialized liquor trade, the fierceness of which had not been

experienced at any other time in the history of the Borough.

The liquor interests had gotten a foothold, established their business here and proposed to fasten it upon us. They spent money freely in advertising and placarding the town. They bought space in our local paper, and published articles purporting to come from the noted temperance chiefs such as Dr. Elbert Moses, an able reader and elocutionist, but never known to deliver a temperance lecture in his life. They hired a young lawyer from our town, named Charles Lysle Seif, who directed their campaign, wrote and spoke for them. Mr. Seif was reared from childhood in our Borough, educated in our public schools, and presumably would imbibe something of our traditions, but apparently did not; and sold his services in defending and trying to fasten this evil business on our people, which they did not want.

The Great
Liquor
Fight

Chas. L.
Seif

This same Charles L. Seif is now a member of the Legislature; also a councilman in our Borough. One cannot help but contrast the work and dream of James Kelly, of the earlier period, and Mr. Seif, of this period, in their conception for the town's well-being.

The dry forces were led and directed by the Community Betterment Association, W. C. T. U., Council of Churches, school authorities, and individuals who wrote and spoke in favor of abolishing these drinking places. The officers of the Betterment Association consisting of Z. H. Rhoades, C. E. Wilford, P. C. Fuqua, Miss Nelle P. Maxwell, E. M. Buell,

E. C. Young, and R. S. Bull, all did valiant service in this successful fight.

The wets used arguments of unemployment, taxes, temperance, speakeasies, loss of revenue, quotations from phoney temperance lecturers, and fly-by-night temperance and other organizations, never heard of before or since.

The Dry forces riddled their arguments, showed up their hypocrisy and phoney organizations, created for the purpose; exposed their so-called temperance lecturers, called on the churches and all friends of a dry town to go to the poles and vote for a dry town and decency. The voters did so; result was almost two to one against liquor and Sunday movies. Edgewood was four to one against the liquor crowd.

Death Prof.
J. L. Allison

Professor J. L. Allison, former Superintendent of Schools, died February, 1935, at the age of 82 years. He retired in 1922 and had been living part of the time since in New York State, and part time in Florida. He was buried in Indiana, Pa.

— 1936 —

Jewish
Synagogue

Not many of our citizens of the past have been Jews. In recent years, however, a noticeable increase in their number has taken place. This small group felt the need of a public place of worship. In September, 1936, Beth Israel Congregation was organized. This organization was indeed something new in our midst, and of course was a welcome addition to the many religious organizations of our Borough.

Thomas Russell (perhaps our oldest citizen) died November 23rd, 1936, aged 97. Mr. Russell was employed by John F. Singer (Singer Mansion) and James Kelly in the early days of the village.

Death
Thos.
Russell

PITTSBURGH'S DARKEST HOUR

On March 18th, 1936, the city of Pittsburgh experienced its darkest hour physically, in her history, not excepting the great fire. We take note of it here because of its effect upon us.

The Great
Flood

During the night of the 17th, both rivers, the Monongahela and the Allegheny, began to rise so rapidly, due to melting snows at the head waters that those people living in the low lands and along the river were oblivious of the terrible danger rushing down upon them, and were trapped in their homes and beds with no means of escape; many drowned. The property loss ran into millions. Thirty-six lives were lost, forty-three reported missing, and 35,000 were homeless as a result of this terrible calamity.

Never in the history of the city had there been such a calamity. The water overflowed the banks of both rivers, pushed over into the main part of the city, cutting off access to all banks, office buildings and department stores, and other places of business north of Smithfield Street, east to Liberty Avenue and Pennsylvania Station.

Police moved about in this flood, in hip boots, while row boats moved in and out of buildings and places where the day before business was transacted on foot. Fires in boilers and heating plants were drowned; elevators, telephones, telegraph,

Candle
Light

street cars, buses and all transportation ceased except on the Pennsylvania Railroad east and across to the North Side by shuttle trains. The electric power station at Brunot Island ceased operation, and the city was in darkness except for tallow candles and oil lamps, and this supply was quickly exhausted.

Passenger
and Freight
Stations
Flooded

Warnings were issued by radio to conserve water, food and coal. All three produce yards, storage houses and food stores were caught and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of food value destroyed; danger of a food famine was seen. Appeals went out, and a splendid response from neighboring cities and states was received and trucks of relief started to us. Oil lamps and candles came by airplane.

Contrast

Only those who witnessed this scene could appreciate its meaning. Yesterday a great, thriving, busy city, with automobiles rushing all directions, its buses, street cars, airplanes, trains and elevators carrying their human traffic in every direction; department stores crowded, theatres crowded, great multitudes moving through its streets, which at night were lighted like unto day; which was destined to be changed in twelve hours or less to a scene of utter desolation.

Desolation

When daylight came on the morning of the 18th, the throbbing busy life had disappeared like a dream in the night and in its place this scene of desolation. Banks, stores, office buildings, streets, all deserted, except for a few City and State Police, and rescue men in boats. A great sea of muddy water covering sidewalks and streets and surround-

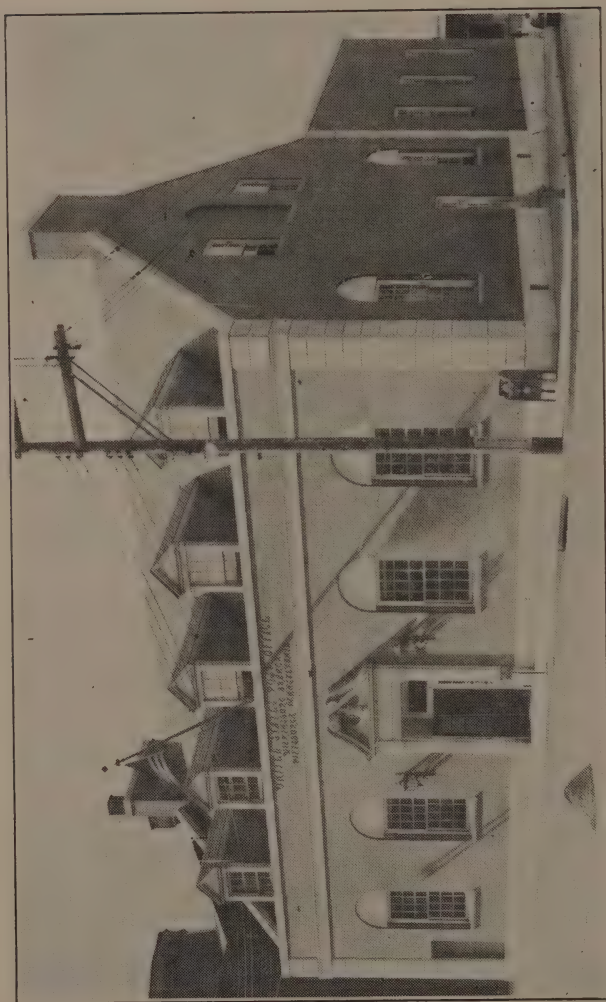
ing those buildings of yesterday. All transportation stopped, the noises of the city stilled, thousands out of work and homeless.

The water rose to the ceiling of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Station covering all its tracks, passenger cars and train sheds. It reached the second story of buildings on Water Street, entered McCann's and Horne's stores. On the North Side the water backed up to the Pennsylvania Fort Wayne Station and covered all buildings to the second stories, between the river and the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. The author moved through the police lines in the midst of these scenes taking moving pictures. From the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks it appeared like a great lake with hundreds of houses floating on the surface. The great city lay helpless at the feet of "Old Man River", which rose in the silence of the night to remind man that his warnings cannot be disregarded, except at awful cost.

As evening came and darkness settled over the city, the great towering darkened office buildings and hotels stood ghost-like in appearance; the streets were like canyon trails winding between mountains (buildings) on either side, with no light except for the light of a lantern here and there, and no sound save the sound of the dipping oars as someone moved in or out of a building in a boat. It was indeed Pittsburgh's darkest hour.

In Wilkinsburg it was the same, except for the water. Being an inland town with no streams, we were saved from the water damage. Our streets were deserted, our homes darkened, the radio and

Wilkinsburg



WILKINSBURG POST OFFICE—DEDICATED 1936.

telephone silent, music ceased. The flickering candle light made members of one's family seem like spectres as they moved from room to room, pushing buttons from habit, forgetting we had been thrust backward a half century in one night. Not in fifty years have our people and those of the city been made to realize how our lives are tied to or dependent on electricity; how the whole scheme of our daily lives, both business and social, may be snarled by the cessation of ministration of this one great blessing, about which we know so little.

On October 28th, 1936, the new Post Office building was dedicated by J. Austin Latimer, Executive Assistant to the Postmaster General. Congressman James L. Quinn also spoke. The service was arranged by the Chamber of Commerce. The splendid building is a one-story structure of the Colonial type. It does credit to the town, and is situated near the railroad station and Municipal Building as it should be.

A striking contrast is apparent between the Post Office of yesteryear (1840—see page 51, Abram Stoner's store) where it was first established; and where a few, perhaps a dozen, letters and a county or state newspaper or catalogue were received daily; while in the present splendid modern building, over fifteen and a half million pieces of mail were handled last year. Then, one man gave about one hour or more a day to actual post office work. Now our Post Office employs 15 clerks, 3 janitors, 38 carriers, 9 sub-carriers, 3 trucks and 1 rural route. At first it served less than 200 people; it now serves 70,000. Mr. Fred Smith is the present

superintendent, succeeding Mr. F. E. Baker in September, 1938, who was advanced to another position in the city, after serving this office for a period of 17 years.

— 1937 —

Golden
Jubilee
1887-1937

Wars and rumors of wars, unemployment and politics did not allow our people to forget that the time for celebrating our Golden Anniversary was upon us. The city fathers discussed plans to make the occasion the most outstanding in the history of the Borough. To this end large committees were named. These committees and the full program of the celebration may be found in the official publication known as "The Nuggett", published and ably edited by James A. Dean and George M. Kurth.

The plan proposed was to have the program begin in April and each month attempt to intensify the interest with meetings, parties and plays until October, climaxing the event with a week's continuous celebration, ending with a historical pageant and grand parade. This plan was carried out, but some difficulty encountered in sustaining interest through the months from one event to the other and in co-ordinating these events.

It was the most interesting as well as the most illuminating celebration ever held in the Borough, depicting as it did by window-displays, costumes, drama and song the life of the early settlers to the coming of Colonel Dunning McNair, later James Kelly and Judge William Wilkins, after whom the town was named.

The schools and churches participated in it, and gave valuable aid in sustaining interest.

The United Presbyterian Home for the Aged added a two-story addition to their home this year, giving them a much-needed assembly room.

U. P. Home
Addition

The steel business took a downward dip this year, reaching a low of twenty-five percent of capacity. This was largely due to sit-down strikes that afflicted the country at this time, particularly the automobile industry. Workmen took possession of plants, refused to work or allow the plant to operate. In a few cases the workmen damaged and disabled the machinery so that the plant was put out of commission.

Sit-Down
Strikes

This type of strike was new to our country. It is reported to have been copied from the French. The leaders of some of the labor organizations could not control their members and agreements were broken without regard to consequences. Some employers were not permitted to enter the offices. Sheriffs and Governors refused to interfere, except in Michigan where Governor Murphy ousted the strikers.

Living costs remain low, very little change.

Practically all the vacant land in the Borough had been built upon, except some individual lots here and there. There were no large plots left except on the northeast and eastern part of town. The Federal Housing Association, Building and Loan Associations, and contractors were urging a building campaign of modern houses.

In March, 1937, the West Real Estate Company, C. Arthur West, president, began the promotion of

Blackridge
Develop-
ment

what is known as the Blackridge Estate. At the close of 1939, 115 modern brick and stone houses have been built and occupied, and 10 more are now under construction. It has become a splendid residential settlement with all the conveniences of gas, water, electricity, sewers and paved streets. One-half is in the Borough of Wilkinsburg, one-quarter each in Wilkins Township and Churchill Borough. The latter was made a Borough in the last few years, and is also developing rapidly along the Greensburg Pike Road and vicinity.

Laketon Road district has developed very rapidly in the past two years and will likely be built up solidly with the Blackridge district not many years hence.



HARRY E. CARMACK.

Death removed one of our most prominent and useful citizens, Harry E. Carmack, this year. Mr. Carmack was an able attorney, an outstanding church man and Sabbath School teacher. His influence was felt outside of his own denomination (Presbyterian) and his counsel sought after in other faiths and movements of a constructive nature in county, city and borough.

Death H. E.
Carmack

Charles W. Walmer died August 17th, 1937. Mr. Walmer was one of our leading business men, head of the Chas. W. Walmer Hardware Company, one of the outstanding stores of its kind in the State.

Death Chas.
Walmer



PITTSBURGH RAILWAY CO. NEW STREAMLINED CAR, 1937.

Harvey M. Phifer died September 25th, 1937. Mr. Phifer was for many years store manager for Joseph Horne Company, a prominent churchman, and highly respected citizen. Because of his large circle of friends and acquaintances, his funeral was the most outstanding of the year, conducted from

Death H. M.
Phifer

South Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, of which he was an active member and official.

On June 27th, 1937, the Callender Memorial Church, Reverend P. B. Kurtz, D.D., pastor, dedicated their new brick church building on Ross Avenue. Previous to this time services had been held in the Malta Temple.

W. J. McGregor retired from the office of Coroner of Allegheny County, after serving in that capacity from 1921 to December 31st, 1937.

— 1938 —

Building

Building has been at a standstill for several years. A new building is almost a curiosity. There is a demand for slum clearance, but our town has very little, if any, of the type of buildings belonging in this class. The city, however, is now engaged in such a project on a rather large scale.

Screen Drama

The spoken drama as well as the screen are feeling the pinch of the prolonged panic. The moving picture houses have resorted to what is known as "Bank Night", giving cash prizes for attendance.

Panics

During the history of our country panics usually have been the result of a shortage of money, sometimes referred to as "Money Panics". Inability to secure capital for enlargement of industries, new industries or building projects. The cause for these has been attributed to Wall Street, and called manufactured panics. This cannot be said of this one, as money is plentiful; in fact, the banks have been unable to invest their funds profitably, compelling them to cut their interest on deposits. Loans have

been floated at the lowest rate of interest in the history of the government.

The undeclared war of the Japanese against China, and the terrible slaughter of the defenseless women and children, has kept the world in a nervous state since the time of the first attack of the Japanese.

Japanese-
China War

Germany's saber rattling by Hitler has intensified this condition, until now it is a case of the jitters.

Once more political scandals shake the whole State. Charges and counter charges reaching up to the highest State official, involving Pittsburgh and neighboring citizens.

Penna.
Political
Scandals



JOHN McDOWELL, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Republican
Party

Another political upheaval this year put Pennsylvania back in the Republican column once more, after the Democratic Party had been in control for only four years. The Spoils system was probably responsible for their defeat.

John
McDowell

Mr. John McDowell, editor and publisher of our local paper, "The Wilkesburg Gazette", was elected to Congress on the Republican ticket, taking the seat formerly held by James L. Quinn, Democrat, of Braddock.

Charles Seif, of Wilkesburg, was elected as a member of the State Legislature this year.

Verona
Street Car
Discon-
tinued

Verona street cars ceased operation March 28th, 1938, for which buses were substituted.

James A.
Wilson Dies

James A. Wilson died May 3rd, 1938. He was the last of the first group of Councilmen elected when the Borough was first incorporated in 1887.

— 1939 —

Building
Resumes

With the opening of the new year there were signs that new building construction would be revived. The Federal Government had been doing everything possible through its various loan agencies to revive this vital trade. This revival caused a drop in unemployment to about ten millions.

Political
Scandals

Political scandals charged against the Democratic Party at Harrisburg and the trial of State Chairman David L. Lawrence made first page reading in the daily papers all through the year. Mr. Lawrence was acquitted. Several others of former Governor Earle's cabinet were convicted and sentenced.

On September 3rd, 1939, England and France declared war on Germany. These three great nations girded themselves for another titanic struggle and bloodletting to decide what nation should rule over certain areas of territory and groups of people, whose sufferings (largely imaginary) so greatly disturbed the soul of Dictator Adolph Hitler of Germany that he decided to have these same people killed, maimed, starved and made homeless, all or in part, and in addition to these untold thousands of others to be sacrificed in like manner in order to accomplish his end. That it would surely draw Germany to the brink of the abyss, and bankrupt her beyond hope of recovery, made no difference. Rule or ruin seems to be the goal.

Allies
Declare
War on
Germany

Hitler's
Distress
for Poor

England and France as allies are just as determined to stop Hitler at a cost of lives and wealth no less great. Each of these Christian (?) nations will proceed to bomb each other by land and sea, killing innocent women and children, blowing up the most sacred shrines and peaceful homes, whose values to what we call civilization has been beyond the price of rubies; and all because men have not learned to sit down together, and settle their differences.

WAR

Our nation and our own local people having paid such a heavy price in the World War all for naught, are terribly wrought up for fear our leaders will take us again into a war which does not concern us, except to bring peace to this war-cursed world.

Happily, the signs at this time seem to indicate that our churches will not subscribe to a war, except we are attacked on this continent, if then.

All-
Weather
Highway

The new high speed, all-weather highway, which had been under discussion for a year or more began construction in the east during the close of Governor Earle's administration; made unprecedented progress under Governor James' first year (1939) as Governor. It is claimed this construction work has never been equalled in the history of the nation. It is to be a toll road, and is reported to save from two to six hours traveling time between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg, on account of no stops, and no speed limit. Its actual length is 164 miles, ending at Carlisle. It is a four-lane road, allowing two lanes in each direction, with very little grade. It joins the Lincoln Highway east of Irwin, Pa. It will follow through Wilkinsburg (the bottle-neck of both the William Penn and Lincoln Highways) for the present.

It has been a great problem for the engineers to carry these highways through our town away from the congestion. It is proposed to go through Frick Park and Edgewood by tunnel and bridge.

Thanks-
giving
Changed

Thanksgiving was changed this year, being moved forward one week to November 23rd by proclamation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Brace
Laundry
Razed

One of our oldest landmarks, the Brace Brothers Laundry, a brick building situated on Trenton Avenue between Kelly Street and Rebecca Avenue, was razed in November, 1939. It was built in 1880, and has been out of commission as a plant for a number of years, being used by the company for storage, sorting and office.

Y.W.C.A.

At the close of the year, and just before going to press, the Young Women's Christian Association of



BRACE BROS. LAUNDRY—BUILT 1880—RAZED 1939.

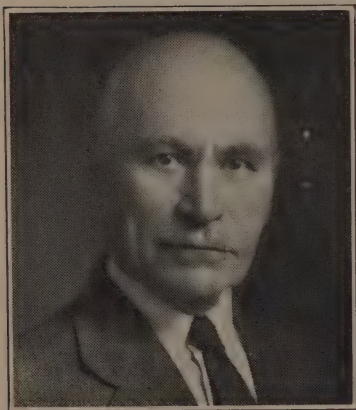
our Borough reported burning their mortgage on their clubhouse, a splendid record for this organization.

Death took several of our most prominent citizens during this year, among whom were Haven Wolf, attorney-at-law, former councilman and prominent in church circles, died in December, 1939. John F. Miller, honorary Life President of the Boy Scouts of America, East Borough Council, prominent in community affairs of the eastern boroughs, outstanding philanthropist, died in September, 1939.

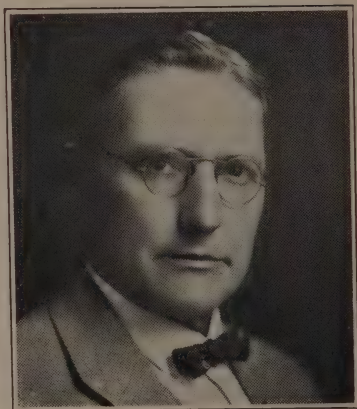
Professor Charles R. Coffin died January 16th, 1940, at the age of 93 years. Professor Coffin was a teacher in these parts for over seventy years, having taught in the public schools, as well as in the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Deaths

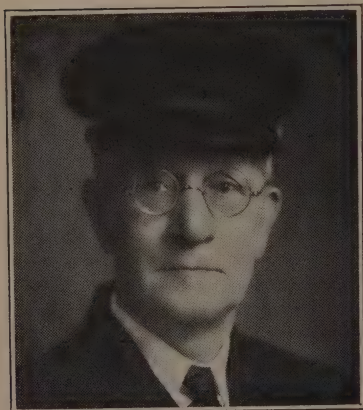
Professor
Coffin's
Death



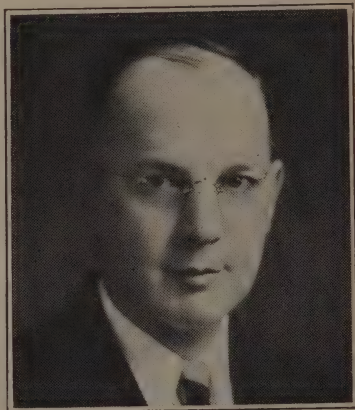
CHARLES F. SPERLING,
BOROUGH ENGINEER.



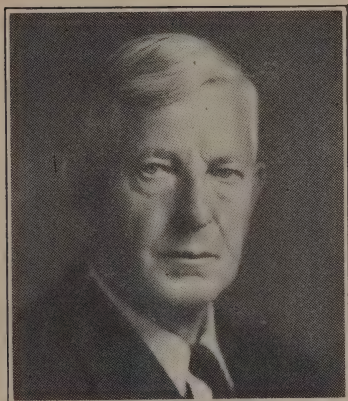
WALTER ELDER,
TAX COLLECTOR.



J. M. SNYDER,
HEALTH OFFICER—DECEASED.



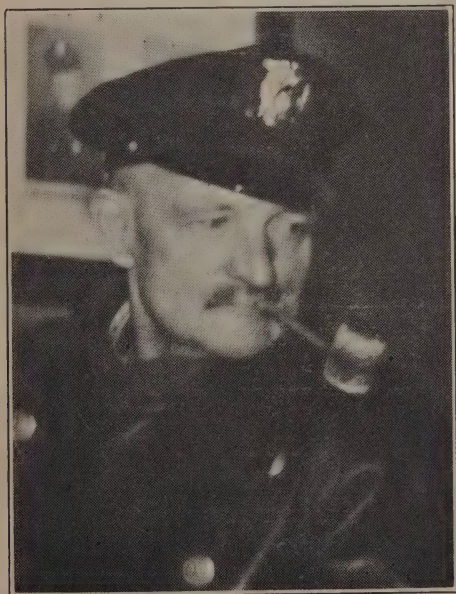
JOHN C. DEAL,
BOROUGH SECRETARY.



SAMUEL JEFFERIES, FIRE CHIEF.



JAMES HARRIS,
CHIEF OF POLICE.



JACOB FRY, PATROLMAN.



JOHN A. KEYES.
EX-BURGESS

George
Rankin, Jr.

George Rankin, Jr., of our Borough, began his second term as County Commissioner on January 1st, 1940, having been re-elected with the two other members of the old board. All three Commissioners received high praise from the three city daily papers for their past economic administration of county affairs, by their reduction of taxes and efforts to simplify its system.

Parking
Meters

The parking of automobiles on our main streets has been a problem for several years. Time limits were not very satisfactory. The most successful method tried elsewhere was the Meter System, charging five cents per hour. Council discussed this for several months and finally adopted this method, and the meters were installed in February, 1940, and are now in operation.

New
Municipal
Building

For a number of years, many of our citizens were of the opinion that our Borough had outgrown the old Municipal Building erected in 1890.

The old building had served well its day and purpose, but was not adequate to the demands of the present. Edgewood, our sister Borough, had put us to shame with a splendid new and up-to-date building.

There was much discussion among the various organizations and clubs of town during the early part of 1938 as to the kind and size of the building. Plans were drawn to meet the needs as seen at that time, but the cost was excessive and Council dropped the matter.

Later the same year, perhaps October, Council was informed there was a chance of securing some help from the Federal Public Works Administra-

tion if they would act quickly. They had plans drawn, approved, and adopted, and secured a grant from the Federal Government. Arrangements were made for a bond issue. The bonds were sold at 2%, to run for a period of not exceeding twenty years, some redeemable in ten years.

Ground was broken in January, 1939, and the building completed and dedicated January 1st, 1940, at a cost of \$424,202.00. Of this amount the Federal Public Works Administration paid \$130,-014.00. The building committee consisted of George F. Siefers, Harry R. Rowland and James H. Steel.

The Cost

The members of Council at this time were James H. Steel, Roy Maxwell, Harry R. Rowland, Dr. William M. Findley, James H. Bell, Thomas E. Whitten, Lee M. Mullen, Sheriden B. Heep, and George F. Siefers, President, and William P. Yocum, Burgess.

Building
Committee

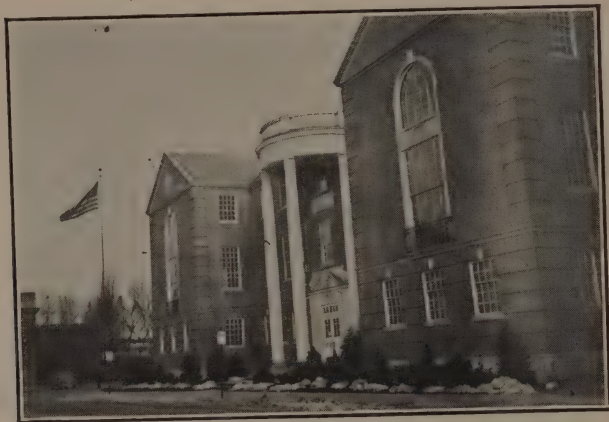
Other Borough officers were as follows: Charles Sperling, Borough Engineer; J. M. Snyder, Health Officer; Thomas Henderson, Plumbing Inspector; Carl J. Heyne, Controller; Walter Elder, Tax Collector; John C. Deal, Secretary; G. Paul Moore, Treasurer; Samuel Jeffries, Fire Chief; James Harris, Chief of Police; and Annabelle Verock, Stenographer.

Borough
Officers

The program opened at 10:55 A. M. January 1st, 1940, with an artillery salute. Following this a parade; dedication of flag pole; final meeting of Council in the old building, and first meeting in the new building.

Dedicatory
Program

The speakers for the afternoon session were Thomas E. Whitten, William P. Yocum, Mrs. G. D. Stevenson, George F. Siefers, Roy G. Bostwick. The dedicatory address was delivered by the Honorable John R. McDowell, member of Congress, 31st District of Pennsylvania.



MUNICIPAL BUILDING—DEDICATED JANUARY 1, 1940.

The Need

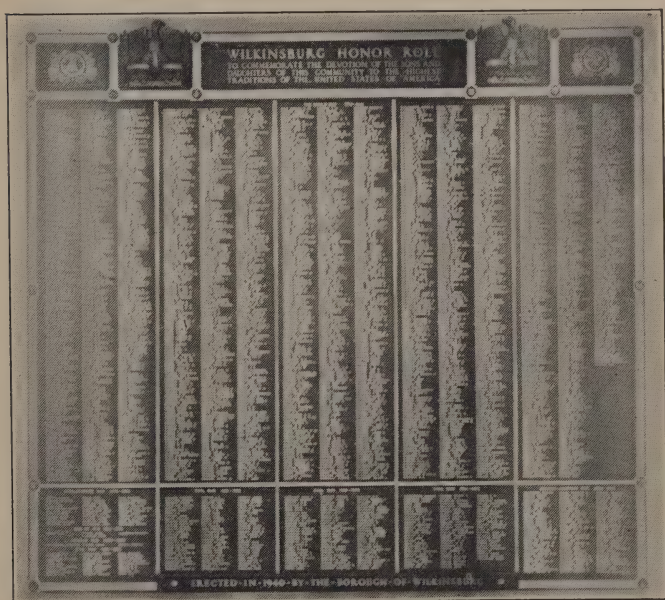
The new building is not only a stately structure, but is also commodious. Council has planned for future expansion in every department.

Council filled a great and pressing need when they included an auditorium on the third floor for public meetings of a sizeable kind. We needed badly a public hall in the center of town, open to all and easy of access.

Library

Another splendid provision was the housing of the town Library in the new building. This was not only a matter of economy, saving considerable in

rent, but it brought the library back to the center of town where it belonged, and a more desirable place for a quiet reading room than the old location. Next to the churches and schools, there is nothing, perhaps, so indicative of the culture of any community as the provision made by the authorities, for placing within reach of youth the riches and blessings of good literature.



WILKINSBURG HONOR ROLL. DEDICATED JUNE 8th, 1940.

On June 8th, 1940, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the Borough Council dedicated a bronze plaque in the Municipal Building on which are recorded the names of 2,497 soldiers who

went forth to battle in defense of the flag from this Community in the several wars during the past 164 years of our history.

Of this number, 33 fought in the Revolutionary War, three in the War of 1812, four in the War of 1847, 276 in the Civil War, 93 in the Spanish-American War, and 2,088 in the World War.

The Committee consisted of Major Herman B. Furlong, chairman; Nathan M. McDowell and W. L. Anderson of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Lt. Col. Wallace W. Wilson, of the American Legion; and H. R. Rowland, chairman. Roy Maxwell and F. D. Graf represented the Borough Council.

A splendid military parade took place at 3 P. M.

The speakers for the dedicatory services were:

H. R. Rowland, chairman,

W. P. Yocum, Burgess,

Hon. George Rankin, Jr., County Commissioner,

Hon. John McDowell, M. C.,

Major Herman B. Furlong, retired,

Major General Edward Martin, Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, made the dedicatory address,

George F. Siefers, President of Council, presentation of the Honor Roll,

Captain George B. Shields, retired, unveiling the Honor Roll,

Music by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Boys' Band.

Invocation—Rev. H. H. McConnell, D.D.

Benediction—Rev. Albert W. Steinfurth, D.D.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE OLD AND THE NEW

*Retrospective—Future—Charts—Looking backward—Forward
—The greater city—Borough officers—Borough achievements—Schools—Churches—Institutions—Postmasters—
Oldest Business Houses—Clubs—Newspapers—Older
Buildings—Milestones.*

TRENDS

As we bring this work to a close, it seems quite in harmony with its purpose to make mention here of some of the changes that have affected our ways of life and thinking.

Just as plagues cross the seas from the older countries, so do ideas, which become habits and customs; and if enough people agree on one or more of them, they soon become law, both written and unwritten. In this manner our so-called "Puritanic Sabbath" bids fair to become equal to the "Continental Sabbath". We are charged with being the most lawless nation in the world.

The stepping stones to our Nation's greatness, such as the sanctity of the home, marriage, the Sabbath day, fidelity in public office and business, civil oath, the safeguards and standards of conduct set for women and children, have all been badly shaken, abused or abolished since the World War, and we seem to be plunging forward toward an abyss which frightens one to contemplate.

No thinking person will deny that in the past twenty-five years there has been, what we might call, an intellectual and spiritual emancipation. Men and women are saying things, teaching, preaching and writing their beliefs, and new ideas concerning God, church, government, society, or any other subject, with an absolute abandon that would not have been tolerated before the World War either by Church, State or Society.

RELIGION

The average of the church membership is much better educated than in the past and is not inclined to accept the sermon without a critical analysis. They are demanding a higher type of scholarship and leadership than heretofore for which they are willing to pay.

Church membership does not carry the same weight and meaning it once did, due no doubt, to a lack of time, or willingness to take time for Bible study. Nevertheless, it is also true that the character of Christ was never so critically studied or examined by the few as it is today. Church attendance does not hold the importance it once did in the lives of its members.

Few churches can count on one-fourth of the morning attendance for the evening service. Some churches have done away with the evening service, also the Wednesday night prayer service, for lack of attendance.

A higher type of music (usually a paid choir) is required by all churches.

A noticeable increase in ritualism is creeping into the Evangelical Protestant denominations.

The type of sermon is far better today, dealing with local, state, national and world problems in making application of the gospel.

The various branches of certain great denominations are merging, which argues well for the people.

Laymen of all Protestant denominations have much more to say as to the conduct of their denominations than in past decades. There are signs that this is also true in Roman Catholic churches.

Card-playing, dancing, theatres, movies, and those other indulgences that go with them are no longer taboo to most church members, and are regarded as a matter of personal liberty.

Such is a brief picture of churches here and at large. This picture is given here as a matter of record for the future. It is very difficult to find records of church life and conduct of its members except in works devoted almost exclusively to that subject, scarcely ever read by laymen.

POLITICS

There has never been so much corruption disclosed in the history of our nation as has been uncovered in the past few years in many of our largest cities and counties — New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, and our own State Government. It has involved men in high offices; governors, senators, mayors, judges, councilmen, and down to the ward heeler.

Oath of office has meant little or nothing. The office (in most cases) is looked upon as an opportunity for the occupant to enrich himself. His campaign promises and the usual prattle about the Constitution and the dear people are conveniently forgotten.

City and county authorities seemed helpless to bring these offenders to book. The Federal authorities have interfered in order to clean house in most cases.

These conditions cannot be charged to one party alone; both parties are equally guilty. Men of bad character manages to get themselves elected or appointed to office; hired or appointed men of vile reputation and character to places of authority, and together they manipulated the Spoils system.

The result of this is that the cost of administration of borough, city, county and state governments have become alarming. The various offices have been over-manned in order to build the political machine.

The political machine became so bold, unscrupulous and corrupt that the common people easily discovered they had been tricked, that promises or agreements were mere scraps of paper. Taxes, as a result, have risen to such an extent that men are questioning whether it really pays to own one's home. Happily our Borough has escaped all of these scandals and our affairs have been honestly administered.

Being a member of either political party does not make a person either a rogue or a saint.

We should keep in mind that these exposures are

for the good of the nation, and to the everlasting credit of the present Administration at Washington, it has not interfered.

The elections in recent years have clearly shown that Party slogans cannot hold the people in line as they once did. They can and do move across party lines if occasion demands. This is the encouraging sign in these troublesome times.

SOCIAL

Who is the Dictator? Who tells us what we shall eat, what we shall drink, what we shall wear or not wear? What hour we shall go to a party, and the proper time to return from it? We seem to remember a phrase "Polite Society", but that was many, many years ago.

There was a time when a drinking man was shunned and barred from respectable homes. The same was true of a divorced man or woman, not so today. Once a man asked permission to smoke; today he offers his cigarettes to his lady friend, often his flask. We can remember when a man arose and gave a lady his seat in a street car or in a public hall. Now he does his best to beat her to it. Profanity and sex subjects were once taboo; now young ladies do not hesitate to use profane language on the least provocation, and vulgar speech is so common in elevators, street cars and public places, it has ceased to attract attention.

To see a woman smoke (other than Grandmother) at home or in public places would have been scandalous. Since 1935 she sets the example

for her children. Women are found smoking in restaurants, hotels, clubs, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., hotels and Pullmans.

Some of the so-called "Four Hundred" announce their daughters' entrance into society at the watering and winter resorts, featuring them in the press in bathing suits. Such is a brief picture of social life in 1940. "What price liberty."

CRIME

The crime wave that has swept across our country in the past quarter of a century has been frightful. Petty thieving; bank, messenger, gasoline stations, homes, stores, churches and schools robberies; kidnapping; murder of the most heinous type, by parents murdering their children, children murdering parents, husbands their wives, and wives their husbands. Poisoning plots and killings exposed; women hanged, electrocuted and given life imprisonment indicates how cheap human life has become since the war. The causes have been charged against the broken-down home, the church, the school, the movies and the newspapers. Perhaps, the last two are the most guilty, in that they have made heroes and heroines out of the greatest of our criminals on the screen and printed page leading youth along the route of the "easy way". Our town has borne its share of thieving, robbery and murder.

TRADES

The Yankee, once recognized as a genius, jack of all trades, one who knew something of all the

skilled trades, has slipped and is now a specialist or piece worker.

What parent of American stock today decides that his sons shall be carpenters, bricklayers, stone masons, shoemakers, plumbers or plasterers? He sends them into the professions, or white-collar jobs. Most all of the trades have been taken over by those of foreign extraction. Even the Negro missed his opportunity in trades and he is being rapidly crowded into the background. Almost all of the professions are overcrowded.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

As one considers the large number of women's organizations, the names of which are recorded in these pages and the reasons given for their organization, one is inclined to contrast them with the activities of women in the earlier days, even prior to Women's Suffrage.

The W. C. T. U., the Ladies' Auxiliary to the G. A. R., Daughters of the American Revolution, the auxiliaries of the various fraternal organizations, church societies, the singing and literary societies, were about the only organizations in which woman's voice and work were recognized. Only a limited number of these had a constructive program that commanded attention, most of them were of a social nature. They restricted attendance to membership and their programs were more an innocent evening of pleasure. The church groups and one or two others were different, their programs reaching out into local, county, state, national and world programs.

Since women received the right of suffrage, her organizations have multiplied greatly, until today within our borders may be found an organization to meet the requirements of the most exacting, whether actual or imaginary.

Since women have displaced men to a great extent in office, factory and most all of the professions, she has developed a feeling of independence, hardly recognized by women at the beginning of the present century.

These organizations are the result of this independence and a seeming effort on her part to stabilize her venture without the help of the opposite sex, as to protecting her rights. There is also a group effort toward betterment along literary and cultural lines, all of which is very worthy. The aims of some of these groups seem greatly circumscribed, but if their voice and vote could be expressed or registered in some central group, representing the whole group of women's organizations in the borough, Wilkinsburg could be made safe against anything of an undesirable character.

The nearest approach to something akin to a clearing house (similar to the Council of Churches) among those now organized is "The Community Betterment Association". If each women's organization could have membership in the Community Betterment Association their influence in the community for good would be felt beyond anything they are now accomplishing with their scattered numbers. Its representatives could help to formulate the Association's policies and movements and

carry back to its parent body the findings and recommendations of the Council.

What will the next decade or two do to our Women's Organizations? Will some great leader among them rise up and lead the way to a closer knit organization to be a power in the Borough, or will they fold up one by one, and disappear?

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Membership in most fraternal organizations was considered a badge of good citizenship and good standing in the larger towns and villages at the beginning of the present century.

From the beginning of our nation's history they have been a bulwark of strength, exerting a tremendous influence for good by reason of the high principles upon which they were founded and the demand they made upon their members to live up to their teachings.

Most of them were of a beneficial nature, paying disability and death benefits. They maintained a visiting committee and, in the early days, took turns in sitting up at night with the sick. They looked after the widows and orphans of their members, built homes and hospitals for the aged and orphans and maintained them.

The fraternal grip, certain mysterious signs, were great factors in securing jobs and positions of influence for their members in yesteryear. Lodge night and initiation nights were shrouded in deep mystery, for it was a well-known fact that all lodges maintained a large cantankerous goat that

had to be ridden by all new members, and not many came through that ordeal without bodily marks and mental anguish not easily forgotten.

This ferocious goat and mystery surrounding these meetings were always a source of annoyance to the curious and inquisitive wives, and they never ceased to coax their husbands to tell them about his goatship and other doings.

These lodges reached the peak of their usefulness toward the close of the nineteenth century by reason of the increase in the number of physicians in every community, the increase of hospitals and nurses, the severe competition of the insurance companies, and the extension of the work of county, state and Federal Government.

These great and honored institutions are slipping, many folding up and passing out. We do not have half the number in our town that we had at the beginning of the present century. To many of us who have spent half or two-thirds of our lives under their benevolent protection, there comes a feeling of sadness in their going. There is, however, that record of a work well done, for they supplied a need in our young nation's life when we were a part of the western frontier, and they, like the church, moved westward with the early settlers, always standing for law and order, as the Government strove for peace and good-will among men.

May I again remind the reader that in writing a history of Wilkinsburg, we cannot confine ourselves exclusively to those matters and events which took place within the borough limits.

Our people cross its boundary lines daily to earn

a living, as well as for entertainment. Our citizenship is four fold; local, county, state and national. What effects any of the latter three, effects us, to more or less extent. Quick transportation carries us from one end of our nation to the other in a few hours. Our system of communication permits us to sit in comfort in our homes and listen to voices from across the seven seas.

For the above-mentioned reasons and others not mentioned, we have not hesitated to refer to subjects and events which to some might appear to have no place within the covers of this book; but with the wider view, it is apparent, have great significance.

The reference preceding this one, referring to Religion, Politics, Social, Crime and other subjects under the general subject of "Trends" perhaps belongs in this class, yet we must remember that it is the reaction of people to these same subjects that make history.

These great changes come upon us so stealthily that when we are confronted with them, we are at times startled and confused; whereas, if we had been aware of their approach and significance, we might have reacted differently and with greater wisdom.

BURGESSES OF THE BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG
FROM ITS INCORPORATION
1888 to 1940

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Rev. C. W. Smith | 1888—1889 |
| John Semple | 1889—1891 |
| John S. B. Mercer | 1891—1892 |
| J. I. Campbell | 1892—1897 |
| C. C. McClain* | 1897—1898 |
| F. B. Tomb* | 1898—1900 |
| James Horner | 1900—1903 |
| John A. Keys | 1903—1906 |
| A. Stuart | 1906—1909 |
| F. B. Tomb | 1909—1913 |
| Frank H. Anderson* --- March only | 1913 |
| Frank H. Anderson | 1914—1917 |
| John G. Miles | 1918—1922 |
| John G. Miles | 1922—1925 |
| J. R. Langley | 1926—1930 |
| Wm. Turner | 1930—1933 |
| Wm. Yocum | 1934—1940 |

COUNCILMEN OF BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG
FROM ITS INCORPORATION
1888 to 1940

- A -

William Anderson ----- 1888—1889

- B -

James Balph ----- 1891—1893

R. A. Balph ----- 1888—

J. Edgar Beatty ----- 1907—1913

R. W. Beatty ----- 1888—1889

James H. Bell -----1929—1939
George H. Blackmore ---1909—1914

- C -

J. D. Cleavinger -----1892—1897
George V. Craighead ---1934—1935
J. W. Cratty -----1916—1919
H. W. Culp -----1898—1900

- D -

J. M. Davidson -----1901—1903
D. B. Douthett -----1897—1899
D. B. Douthett -----1901—1906

- E -

George W. Eague -----1888—
W. J. Elkin -----1905—1911

- F -

D. R. Ferguson -----1926—1928
W. M. Findley -----1926—1940

- G -

John Gates, Jr. -----1907—1909
N. J. H. Gerwig -----1890—1892; 1895—1900
A. P. Gillespie -----1914—1921
George A. Grabe -----1899—1904
John C. Grabe -----1934—1935
F. L. Graef -----1914—1931
F. D. Graef -----1940—

- H -

F. M. Harrington -----1914—1919
T. W. Hays -----1894—1896
S. P. Heep -----1932—1940
S. J. Horner -----1903—1908
R. B. Hutchinson -----1918—1921

- J -

E. A. Jenkins -----1900—1905

Albert W. Johnson -----1930—1933

- K -

Charles Kearns -----1914—1926

George H. Kirkpatrick --1932—1935

Daniel Krider -----1890—1892

- L -

John M. Lindsay -----1910—1917; 1926—1929

T. D. Lynch -----1911—1915

- M -

Ray Maxwell -----1936—1940

L. R. Mechling -----1920—1931

J. S. B. Mercer -----1896—1898

J. F. Miller -----1899—1903

C. A. Mitinger -----1890—1891

Thomas Moore -----1926—1931

Lee M. Mullin -----1937—1939

- Mc -

Frank McComb -----1906—1908

T. W. McCune -----1888—1890

S. L. McCurdy -----1909—1915

H. W. McIntosh -----1890; 1896—1898

T. J. McKalip -----1891—1893

John S. McKelvey -----1904—1913

Thomas McMurray -----1893—1895; 1912—1919

J. M. McNall -----1904—1915

- N -

J. A. Newell -----1892—1894

- P -

Herbert Patterson -----1936—

E. Z. Peffer -----1905—1907

F. S. Pershing -----1894

- R -

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| W. D. Rankin | -----1922—1925 |
| J. R. Rhodes | -----1926—1933 |
| Al K. Robinson | -----1934—1937 |
| Harry R. Rowland | -----1930—1940 |

- S -

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Charles L. Seif | -----1940— |
| George F. Seifers | -----1934—1940 |
| B. F. Shafer, Sr. | -----1895—1898 |
| John Sperling | -----1893—1895 |
| James H. Steel | -----1931—1933; 1936—1940 |
| Samuel Steel | -----1889—1906 |
| Arthur Stewart | -----1889—1891; 1894—1902 |
| C. B. Stewart | -----1891—1894 |
| J. Clark Stuart | -----1926—1930 |

- T -

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Samuel Taylor | -----1908—1911; 1914—1917 |
| S. H. Thompson | -----1899—1904 |
| William Turner | -----1916—1929 |

- W -

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Jacob Weinman | -----1891—1915 |
| Whitten | -----1931—1933; 1938—1940 |
| James A. Wilson | -----1888—1890 |
| Haven V. Wolf | -----1918—1925 |
| Jonathan Wood | -----1890 |
| W. B. Wylie | -----1922—1925 |

- Y -

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Frank Yourison | -----1922—1925 |
|----------------|----------------|

SCHOOL DIRECTORS 1885—1939

- A -

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Dr. Robert W. Allison | __1895—1929 |
| Robert W. Allison | -----1927—1939 |

Rev. C. L. Alspach -----1898—1899
 J. D. Anderson -----1902—1914
 Dr. J. M. Anderson -----1913—1922

- B -

W. F. Bremner -----1910—1911
 Rev. J. A. Burnett -----1893—1896; 1898—1900

- C -

Daniel Carhart -----1888—1889; 1893—1901
 Harold S. Carmack -----1930—1939
 Vernon R. Covell -----1919—1926
 J. C. Cox -----1904—1905

- D -

Mrs. John E. Dean -----1930—1934
 W. H. Devore -----1890—1892
 Carroll B. Dick -----1933—1939
 S. B. Donaldson -----1890—1893

- E -

R. M. Ewing -----1896—1898

- F -

J. C. Ferguson -----1907—1908; 1925—1939

- G -

W. A. Given -----1895—1897
 William Goldie -----1899
 C. H. Gray -----1904—1905
 Ralph K. Grieve -----1936—1939

- H -

L. R. Hagan -----1909—1912; 1914—1918
 M. H. Henning -----1891—1893; 1897—1914
 1919—1930
 J. C. Hill -----1886—1887
 P. F. Hodge -----1885—1887

- J -

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| S. H. Jackson | -----1897—1899 |
| W. R. Jones | -----1897—1904 |

- K -

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| W. J. Kennedy | -----1902—1904 |
| John A. Keyes | -----1899—1900 |
| D. S. Kountz | -----1890—1892 |

- L -

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| A. O. Laufman | -----1890—1891 |
| John Lindsay | -----1901—1909 |

- M -

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| G. T. Marshall | -----1912—1913 |
| Rev. F. Dean Miller | -----1913—1914 |
| David Morris | -----1894—1896 |
| W. H. Morison | -----1905; 1907—1908 |

- Mc -

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| V. B. McCarthy | -----1892 |
| J. D. McClure | -----1901—1903 |
| W. M. McIntyre | -----1892—1893 |
| Mrs. Minerva McKibben | -----1935—1939 |
| A. J. McGiffin | -----1915—1918 |
| A. B. McMurray | -----1923—1937 |
| Thomas McMurray | -----1911 |
| Matthew McWhinney | -----1885 |
| John McWilliams | -----1894—1896 |

- R -

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Dr. J. E. Riggs | -----1890—1892 |
| Mrs. R. B. Robinson | -----1917—1928 |

- S -

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| J. S. Stevenson | -----1885—1891 |
| J. G. Sansom | -----1907—1912 |
| William W. Scott | -----1919—1928 |

TREASURERS 1885—1939

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| John G. Kelly | |
| (Braddock) ----- | 1885—1891 |
| P. J. Pierce ----- | 1892—1899; 1901—1903 |
| Frank Miller ----- | 1900—1905; 1910—1911 |
| R. L. Finley ----- | 1907 |
| J. E. Peterson ----- | 1908—1912; 1913 |
| D. B. Clouser ----- | 1914—1917 |
| Frank Munroe ----- | 1918—1920 |
| George R. McNary ----- | 1909— |
| A. K. King ----- | 1921—1932 |
| K. M. Hewitt ----- | 1933—1939 |

SOLICITOR

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| James E. Hindman ----- | 1905—1939 |
|------------------------|-----------|

BOROUGH'S ACHIEVEMENTS 1888—1939

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Paved streets and alleys—38 miles, cost— | \$2,339,557 |
| Sewers authorized—52 miles to date --- | 451,000 |
| Fire equipment—30 men ----- | 76,000 |
| Culverts—3 miles ----- | 277,000 |
| Street lights—electric—656 lights ----- | 300,000 |
| Play grounds | |
| Municipal buildings, Ross Ave. valuation | 65,000 |
| Fire engine houses, Swissvale Avenue--- | 45,000 |
| Public Safety—19 police, 1 chief, 1 | |
| lieutenant ----- | ----- |
| Controller ----- | Carl J. Heyne |
| Borough Clerk ----- | Jno. C. Deal |
| Tax Collector ----- | Walter Elder |
| Solicitor ----- | Herbert Patterson |

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

| | |
|--|-------------|
| First School, cor. Wallace and Center Sts. built | 1840 |
| Second School, Center near Wallace St. ----- | 1850 |
| Third School, Wallace Avenue ----- | 1872 |
| Fourth School, Wallace and Center Sts. ----- | 1875 |
| (the old Academy) | |
| Fifth School, Wallace Ave. (burned | |
| Jan. 13, 1890) ----- | 1880 |
| Junior High School, Wallace Ave. ----- | 1891 |
| Kelly School, Pitt and McNair Streets ----- | 1891 |
| Semple School, Swissvale Ave. ----- | 1903 |
| McNair School, South Avenue ----- | 1895 |
| Johnston School, Franklin St. ----- | 1907 |
| High School, Wallace Avenue ----- | built 1911 |
| Allison School, Wallace Avenue ----- | 1927 |
| Turner School, Laketon and Swissvale Aves.--- | 1927 |
| St. James Parochial School ----- | |
| Teachers ----- | 187 |
| Valuation of buildings and grounds ---- | \$2,204,000 |
| Monthly pay roll ----- | 35,000 |
| Bonded indebtedness ----- | |

CHURCHES

| | Founded | Relocated | Burned | Rebuilt |
|---|-----------|-----------|--------|----------------|
| South Avenue Methodist Episcopal | 1843 | 1892 | 1907 | 1909 |
| Reformed Presbyterian Church | *1845 | | | 1893 |
| United Brethren Church | *1851 | 1892 | | 1892-1903-1927 |
| First United Presbyterian Church | 1883 | | 1895 | 1891-1896 |
| First Presbyterian Church | 1869 | 1899 | | 1901 |
| Second Presbyterian Church | 1903 | 1912 | | 1912-1929 |
| Second United Presbyterian Church | 1894 | | | 1902-1915 |
| Calvary Presbyterian Church | 1905 | | | |
| Waverly Presbyterian Church | 1894 | | | 1924 |
| Miffin Avenue Methodist Episcopal | *1895 | | | |
| Ross Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church | 1905 | | | |
| James Street Methodist Episcopal Church | 1905 | | | |
| First Christian Church | 1901 | 1916 | 1915 | 1916 |
| United Evangelical Church | 1898 | 1915 | | 1915 |
| Calvary Lutheran Church | *1900 | | | |
| First Baptist Church | 1892 | | | 1903 |
| Trinity Reformed Church | *1872 | | | 1903 |
| St. James Roman Catholic Church | 1869 | | 1888 | 1889-1930 |
| Christian Science Church | 1924 | | | |
| Union Gospel Church | * | | | |
| St. Stephens Episcopal | 1890 | 1903 | | |
| Calander Memorial | 1930 | 1937 | | 1937 |
| Church of the Nazarine | Org. 1935 | | | |
| Evangelical Lutheran | Org. 1927 | | | |
| Advent Lutheran | 1927 | | | |

*Remodeled

HOMES FOR THE AGED

| | Founded |
|---|---------|
| The Aged Protestant Home for Women ----- | 1871 |
| Old Couples Protestant Home ----- | 1882 |
| United Presbyterian Home for the Aged ----- | 1892 |

HOSPITALS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Columbia Hospital ----- | Founded 1906 |
| Columbia Hospital Nurses Training School ----- | |

Columbia Hospital Sewing Society---

Wilkinsburg Private Hospital ----- " 1927

The Home for Aged Couples and the Aged Women's Home are located on Swissvale Avenue. These are undenominational, and are for people of any Protestant faith. The United Presbyterian Home is situated on Trenton and Penn Avenues, and is for those of that faith only. The Columbia Hospital is also owned and controlled by a board of this denomination which is known as the United Presbyterian Women's Association.

POSTMASTERS

The management of the postoffice is always a source of interest and the following is a list of those serving since the office was first established in 1840:

| | Term |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Appointed | Expired |
| Abram Stoner ----- | 1840 1844 |
| Edward Thompson ----- | 1844 |
| McKelvey ----- | not known |
| Abraham Stoner ----- | 1863 1883 |
| John S. Stevenson ----- | 1883 1885 |
| David Maxwell ----- | 1885 1889 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------|
| James D. Carothers ----- | 1889 | 1893 |
| David Maxwell ----- | 1893 | 1895 |
| Emanuel Schillo, Supt. ----- | 1895 | 1901 |
| L. L. Hill, Supt. ----- | 1901 | 1907 |
| John S. Aaron, Supt. ----- | 1907 | 1918 |
| C. P. Cupples, Supt. ----- | 1918 | 1923 |
| J. E. W. Baker, Supt. ----- | 1923 | 1938 |
| Fred Smith, Supt. ----- | 1938 to present time | |

The post office has grown from one man to a force of one superintendent, 15 clerks, 38 carriers, 9 subs, one rural deliveryman, 3 janitors. The office serves 70,000 people. There are three trucks for parcel post deliveries. Handles 15,770,000 pieces of mail annually.

ORGANIZATIONS

| | Organized |
|--|-----------|
| Women's Christian Temperance Union ----- | 1887 |
| Chamber of Commerce ----- | 1932 |
| Rotary Club ----- | 1922 |
| Kiwanis Club ----- | 1927 |
| The Lions Club ----- | 1924 |
| Council of Churches ----- | |
| Independent Order of Odd Fellows ----- | 1869 |
| Myrtle Cress Rebecca Lodge I. O. O. F. ----- | 1889 |
| Knights of Malta, Puritan Commandry No. 280 ----- | 1900 |
| Knights of Malta Band ----- | 1915 |
| Dames of Malta ----- | |
| Knights of Pythias ----- | 1872 |
| Pythian Sisters of Temple No. 94 ----- | 1920 |
| Knights of St. John ----- | 1890 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and | |
| Paper Hangers, No. 462 ----- | 1900 |
| Carpenters Local Union No. 430 ----- | 1900 |
| Daughters of Naomi of Knights of | |
| Mystic Chain ----- | 1900 |
| Order of Scottish Clans 229 ----- | 1914 |
| Order of Eastern Star ----- | 1905 |
| Daughters of Scotia, Lady Douglas Lodge | |
| No. 69 ----- | 1915 |
| Ladies of Grand Army of the Republic ----- | 1888 |
| Italian Sons and Daughters of America ----- | 1935 |
| Beth Israel Sisterhood ----- | |
| Colored Community Club ----- | 1931 |
| The Group for Historical Research on | |
| Wilkinsburg ----- | 1934 |
| Women's Civic Club ----- | 1905 |
| Junior Civic Club ----- | 1933 |
| Junior Section Women's Club ----- | 1923 |
| Parent-Teacher Association ----- | 1932 |
| The Community Betterment Association ----- | 1935 |
| Wilkinsburg Business and Professional | |
| Women's Club ----- | 1925 |
| Wilkinsburg Playground Association ----- | 1925 |
| Wilkinsburg Women's Club ----- | 1898 |
| The Evening Department Women's Club ----- | 1934 |
| Wednesday Afternoon Club ----- | 1898 |
| The Red Cross Mayview Club ----- | 1929 |
| Thursday Afternoon Club ----- | 1897 |
| Boy Scouts of America ----- | |
| The Girl Scouts ----- | 1917 |
| Girls' Club of Wilkinsburg ----- | 1936 |
| Boys' Club ----- | 1934 |
| Spartan Club ----- | 1924 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Wilkinsburg Sportsmen's Club | 1924 |
| United Spanish War Veterans, Major James I. Srodes Camp No. 74 | 1916 |
| Ladies' Auxiliary United Spanish War Veterans | 1922 |
| The American Legion, Capt. John M. Clarke Post No. 305 | 1919 |
| American Legion Auxiliary | 1920 |
| Veterans of Foreign Wars, Sergeant David I. Rankin Post No. 234 ... | 1921 |
| David I. Rankin Post 234, Veterans of Foreign Wars Boys' Band | 1928 |
| Ladies' Auxiliary to Veterans of Foreign Wars | 1927 |
| Wilkinsburg Automobile Club | 1906 |
| League of Women Voters | 1915 |
| Council of Republican Women | 1927 |

OLDEST BUSINESS HOUSES

Some of the older firms, who still carry on, are given below :

| | Founded | Ceased Business |
|---|---------|--------------------|
| John Sperling, Shoe Merchant | 1865 | 1920 |
| Brace Brothers, Laundry | 1880 | 1939 |
| Thomas D. Turner, Funeral Director | 1882 | |
| Jacob Wineman (Wineman Brothers) | 1872 | |
| Jno. G. Stumpf, Grocer | 1892 | |
| Caldwell & Graham, Dry Goods | 1889 | |
| Haas Brothers, Grocers | 1900 | |
| William Turner, Florist | 1897 | |
| Creighton & Co., Grocers | 1900 | 1933 |
| Sander & Co. (now Van's Market) .. | 1895 | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Morris Graf & Co., Mantels | |
| and Tile ----- | 1890 |
| Textor Lumber Co. ----- | 1894 |
| George Felger, Tailor ----- | 1899 |
| Kurtz Bros. (now George F. Kurtz, | |
| Tinners and Roofers ----- | 1891 |
| Chas. W. Walmer Hardware Co. ---- | 1900 |
| Pennsylvania Water Co. ----- | 1887 |
| Thomas W. McFadden, Dentist ---- | 1899 |

THE BANKS—1940

| | Founded | Ceased |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------|
| First National Bank ----- | April 1892 | |
| Wilkinsburg Bank ----- | 1896 | |
| Central National Bank ----- | 1900 | 1932 |

THEATRES AND TEMPLES

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Rowland ----- | built 1911 |
| Colonial ----- | 1921 |
| Masonic Temple—South Avenue ----- | 1916 |
| Weiland Theatre—Regal ----- | 1933 |
| State Theatre ----- | |

NEWSPAPERS

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Wilkinsburg Call, Founded 1886 | ceased about 1920 |
| Saturday Journal ----- | 1901 “ unknown |
| Wilkinsburg Valley ----- | 1902 “ unknown |
| Wilkinsburg Booster | about 1907 “ about 1910 |
| Wilkinsburg Sentinel | about 1910 “ 1926 |
| Wilkinsburg Review ----- | 1914 “ unknown |
| Wilkinsburg Progress ----- | 1921 “ 1933 |
| Wilkinsburg Gazette ----- | 1933 |

THE OLDER BUILDINGS

| | |
|--|-------------|
| I. O. O. F. Temple, Penn Ave. ----- | built 1888 |
| Old Grist Mill, Coal and Penn Avenues— | about 1825 |
| Colonial Apts., Hay and Rebecca Aves.— | built 1900 |
| Carl Building, Ross and Wood Sts. ---- | —built 1901 |
| Sperling ----- | ----- |

OLD RESIDENCES

| | Built | Razed |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Singer Mansion ----- | 1866 | |
| Lovejoy Mansion ----- | 1903 | 1929 |

PUBLIC UTILITIES

| | |
|---|------|
| Pennsylvania Railroad Co., began service in | 1851 |
| Peoples Natural Gas Company ----- | 1885 |
| Pennsylvania Water Company ----- | 1889 |
| Duquesne Light Company ----- | 1889 |
| Wilkinsburg Steam Heating Company ----- | 1889 |
| Central District Printing, Telephone and Telegraph Company ----- | 1890 |
| Pittsburgh Railways Co. (electric cars) ----- | 1897 |
| Pittsburgh Railways Co. (Ardmore Line) ---- | 1910 |

GREATEST FIRES

| | |
|---|------|
| St. James Roman Catholic Church ----- | 1888 |
| Western Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf | 1899 |
| Horner Public School ----- | 1895 |
| First United Presbyterian Church ----- | 1895 |
| Turner's Livery Stable ----- | 1907 |
| South Ave. Methodist Episcopal Church ---- | 1907 |
| Caldwell and Graham Building ----- | 1908 |
| Johnson Public School ----- | 1920 |

MILESTONES OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Since Wilkinsburg was first founded about 1765, it is worthy of mention that its inhabitants have witnessed the greatest period of advancement in the history of the world. Because it appears in perfect harmony with the spirit of this work, we can not refrain from a personal comment on the privileges which have been ours, and which we are so prone to forget, because they have come along in the natural course of events, like the morning sunbeams. We have witnessed the clearing of much of the forest, the passing of the log house, the toll gate, dirt and cobble stone roads. In transportation, we have witnessed the passing of the oxen, and largely, the horses, and the coming of the five ton trucks; the passing of the horse street cars, cable cars, and the coming of the modern electric street cars. We have seen the buggy, phaeton, and carriage disappear one by one until, today, the sight of one brings a smile. In their place we have those palaces on wheels in which we annihilate distance with the speed of trains. We have seen great bridges flung across rivers, and lakes, and tunnels bored under them. We have seen the little sail boats blown about by the winds, and a little later gazed upon the Leviathan which breasted the waves and defied the storms. We have seen man pondering over what is beneath those mighty waves, and beheld him build his boat and explore its mysterious depths. We have seen his tears and heard his lament when the voice he loved was stilled in death, but we have seen him cause the

dead to speak and fill the room with song. We have heard him rave as the storm blew down his wires as he talked with friends in distant places, and a little later we have seen and heard him pitch his message and music into space, and send it beyond the seven seas. We have seen him gaze at the birds in envy as he watched them soaring in the heavens, only a little later to see him mount up on wings like eagles, and put them to shame. We have seen one of our own countrymen, Charles Lindbergh, with a courage that is sublime, mount his airplane alone in New York in the early morning of May 20, 1927, and turn his face toward the sea and before the setting of the sun on the following day land in Paris and receive the applause of untold millions the world around, having flown across the sea, 3,600 miles, in 33 hours, 30 minutes, without stopping. We have witnessed the passing of kings and queens; the fall of empires; and the rise of republics. We have seen the habits and customs of whole nations that were hoary with age pass away as a watch in the night. How glorious these achievements, and yet how little most of us had thought on these things. They have come along in the course of daily experience.

—THE END—

**LAUREL
BOOK SERVICE**

KATHERINE AND KARL GOEDICKE
33 West Third St.
HAZLETON, PENNA.

